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MARY CLIFFORD

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MARY CLIFFORD



Photograph by The Church Army.

Mary Clifford.

MARY CLIFFORD

BY

GWEN MARY WILLIAMS



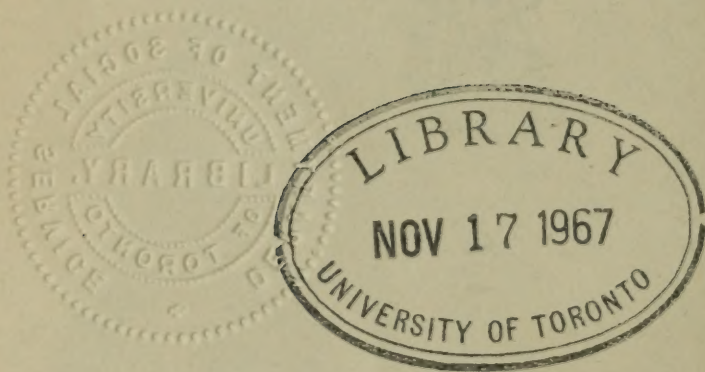
BRISTOL

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PREFACE

IT seems hardly necessary to say anything by way of introduction to this record of the life of a woman who was so widely loved and revered as Mary Clifford, but it is a joy to one who had the privilege of knowing her and working with her during many years to have the opportunity of adding a few words by way of introduction to a book which should be widely read.

In a sense Mary Clifford belongs to the past, to Victorian days. She was one of the first to be a woman Guardian ; in artistic feeling she belonged to the days of Burne-Jones. But at the same time she, in a sane and temperate spirit, was a pioneer in the women's movement, an earnest sympathiser with the ideas and aspirations of the young. It used to be said of her that it was impossible to tell her age. She had the white hair of the old, the fresh complexion and bright expression of the young. It was the same with her mind and temperament. She seemed to combine the wisdom of the old with the enthusiasm of the young, and to know how to bring all into harmony. She was one of those who could not pass unnoticed ; not because she asserted herself or in any way made claims on the attention of others, but because no one could even see her, still less speak a few words with her, without feeling that her beautiful and dignified appearance was the

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expression of an uncommon character. There must be many who have perhaps only heard her speak once at some meeting, but who have never forgotten her, nor the complete harmony there was between manner, voice, words and looks.

The combination of great sweetness of disposition with much strength of character and real practical ability, and added to these a delicious gaiety and sense of humour, made those who knew her feel that there was something unique about Mary Clifford. Now as they read in this book an account of all her activities and interests, and find in her letters and other writings the expression of her ideas on many subjects, and still more of her desire to help and serve, their treasured memories of her will be deepened and enriched. They will find again the woman they loved and revered, in her letters, in the intimate associations of her family circle, and they will find her the same woman who served her native city so well as a Guardian of the Poor, and who by her sane and earnest advocacy advanced so many good causes.

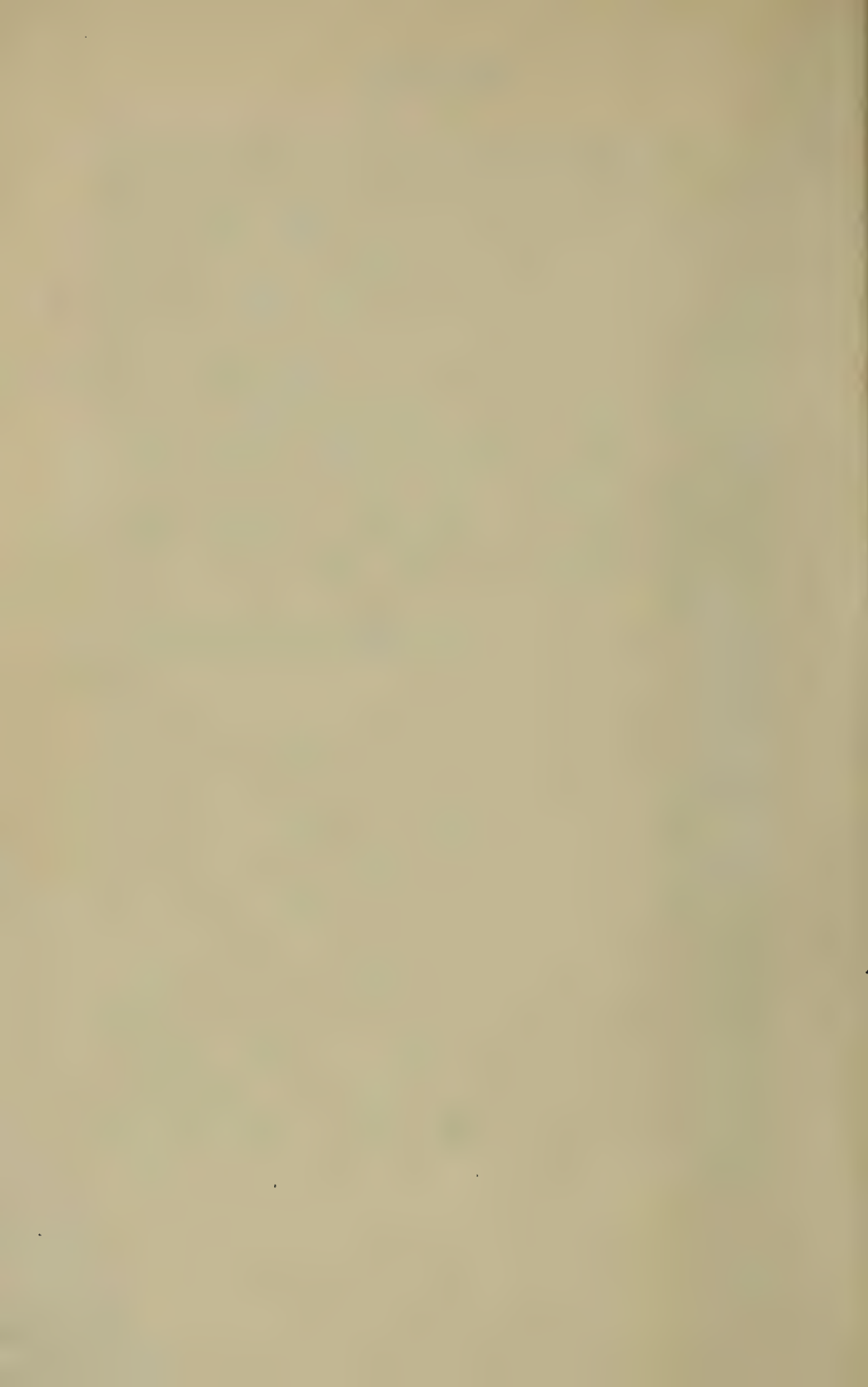
It lends an added interest to this book that it should be written by Mary Clifford's niece. Different generations do not always understand or appreciate one another. But in this case the aunt, always young in heart and interests, made a dividing-line impossible between herself and the nephews and nieces for whom she cared so tenderly. Side by side in these pages her family life with its absorbing interests and her public life with its exacting claims on her thought and time may be seen not to have interfered with each other, but only to have given

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her new opportunities for self-expression. And besides family and work there was the ever-widening circle of friends in every station of life. There seems to have been no limit to her capacity for showing love and interest, and the new friends she was constantly making did not interfere with the older friendships of a lifetime.

This account of her life will not only deepen the admiration felt already by those who knew her, but must win for her new friends, who will rejoice to think they can claim kinship with her in the blessed communion of saints as, kindled by her example, they strive to pursue as she did, whatsoever things are pure, lovely, and of good report.

LOUISE CREIGHTON.



FOREWORD

THOSE who knew Mary Clifford treasure the memory of the beauty of her character : if others fail to find a reflection of it in this book, the fault is in my lack of skill to portray it. It was a character singularly faultless—faultless, but not colourless. I have not been careful to hide the natural failings which were subdued by humility and a great capacity of loving, believing that the value of such lives to us lies in their sharing of our common struggles and not in the remoteness of the ideal they present.

My most grateful thanks are due to the friends whose help will be evident in the following pages. Particularly I desire to express my gratitude to Mrs. Cholmeley, Miss Blanche Pigott, and Professor George Hare Leonard, without whose practical help, advice and encouragement my work would have been far more imperfect than it is.

G. M. WILLIAMS.

152 REDLAND ROAD,
BRISTOL,

November, 1920.

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BOOKLETS AND ADDRESSES

By MARY CLIFFORD

*THE PAIN OF THE WORLD AND HOW TO FACE IT.

*THE POSSIBLE DETERIORATION OF THE WORKER.

†FOUR LETTERS AND A LITTLE STUDY. (FOR UNMARRIED MOTHERS.)

*UNMARRIED MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN.
(FOR RESCUE WORKERS.)

*POOR LAW WORK: SUGGESTIONS AND NEW DEPARTURES (1897).

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN RICH AND POOR. (1898.)

ADVICE TO WOMEN POOR LAW CANDIDATES.
(LEAFLET.)

PRAYERS FOR THE USE OF WARD-SISTERS AND
NURSES IN HOSPITALS AND INFIRMARIES.
S.P.C.K. 1900.

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† Republished by the Church Army.

*Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage ;
And thus I 'll take my pilgrimage.*

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

MARY CLIFFORD

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD

The poet has reversed the order of things when he tells us that we come trailing clouds of glory which melt away and are lost as we proceed on our journey. The truth is that unless we belong to the order of those who crystallise or lose their souls on their passage, the clouds gather about us as we proceed, and as cloud-compellers we travel on to the very end.—W. H. HUDSON, *Far Away and Long Ago*.

MARY CLIFFORD'S father, John Bryant Clifford, was born at Fulneck, the religious settlement of the Moravians, whose quiet dignity is hidden among the Yorkshire moors. Her mother's family, Bristol city merchants, came from the hills and valleys of Somerset where they lie open to the broadening Severn Sea. So that Mary inherited the freedom and independence of the North together with the beauty and poetry and adventure of the West.

She was born on September 8th, 1842, and of her

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own earliest home in Bristol she wrote, late in life, the account that is here given :—

Sometimes I go and walk meditatively in the old-fashioned street, Somerset Street, where we were born. It is just a long line of irregular houses, built in the time of the earliest George by the look of them, no three alike, and crowning the ridge of the hill overlooking Bristol. The houses look at gardens and garden-walls and one or two cottages ; and three very steep hills, paved with steps and inaccessible to carts, run down to Bristol out of the street. The view of the city is spread out, thousands of roofs, church towers and spires, factories ; and beyond, the half circle of hills, Dundry and far-away Lansdown. That view made a lasting impression. It had a great beauty and interest, and was one of the widest a child could have.

Our father was a young Yorkshire clergyman who came with his young wife to take temporary duty at a new church whose vicar, Theophilus Biddulph, was out of health. My father used to tell how he had another request to take the English chaplaincy in Paris, and only the delay of one post made him accept the St. Matthew's request ; but it settled his whole life, for Mr. Biddulph died, and our father stayed on for forty-three years. His young wife, who had been Lauretta Jane Allbutt, died at the end of a year, and the baby Augustus died, and our father, with his happy, social, child-like nature, was left alone.

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The church, which was planned to hold 1,360 people, must have been built in faith, for it stood in green fields with not a single house west or north, and only a sprinkling anywhere near. It was as devoid of beauty as any other church of the thirties. It had no chancel, and wide galleries. But it was loved as few churches have been loved. Our father at once drew the hearts of the Kingsdown people and many others. The church became full, and soon formed a character of its own. "We were like a family party," Mrs. George Prideaux used to say in after years. I suppose that from the beginning my father's teaching and preaching were vigorous, lively, evangelical, not at all introspective, but full of warm love to God and man; very human, and keenly in touch with politics and history and natural science.

There were living at the bottom of the hill in Portland Square (in those days a fashionable neighbourhood) two sisters, Emily and Elizabeth Hassell. It was a family of eight brothers and sisters, but these two left their profoundly dull parish church (for such I feel sure it was) and came with joy of heart up the steep hills to St. Matthew's. Elizabeth must have been the prettier of the two, with regular features and the sweetest, kindest nature—a born aunt as she proved to be. Emily was by far the most intellectual, with a fine pale face and dark eyes. Hers was a diffident, humble nature, with no natural

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self-assurance, but with great instincts and affinities. Our father saw what a treasure she was, and fell in love with her. Outsiders were not sure which of the sisters he was attracted to, and believed Elizabeth to be the chosen one. When it was clear that Mr. Clifford cared for her sister, Elizabeth's unselfish nature accepted the fact without question, and from the day our parents married till the death of our father forty-five years after she took the place of a sister with entire devotion and loving usefulness. She found her reward, for the longer she lived the happier and the more valued she became. She must have at once turned away from all vain regrets and hopes and cheerfully taken up the fresh duties unfolded. As our mother became, eight years after her marriage, a confirmed invalid, all the things she could not do Aunt Lizzie did. She managed the schools, Day and Sunday; did a great deal of social visiting; held a missionary working party; did the parish accounts. All this, it should be noted, with the modest, well-subordinated sense which in those days prevented the wise woman from coming into any sort of rivalry with the men. The parish would have had little internal activity without her.

Our father and mother lived first in a very small house in Somerset Street [No. 8]. There Edward and I were born. It has the same fascinating view and large bay-windows as No. 26, where we moved to in 1845. My father adorned the walls upstairs with a painting

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of Alpine scenery. After his young first wife died the congregation of St. Matthew's made him a present so that he might go away to Switzerland. He went with an old college friend—both were at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge—and this tour and our parents' wedding tour to the English lakes served them with visions of travel for the rest of their two lives. When I went to Switzerland first in 1876 it seemed a familiar land, and the same with the Lakes in 1878. Chamonix and St. Bernard were old friends, and so afterwards were Skiddaw and Helvellyn. From the very first we were shown how to look at natural scenery.

When I was two and Edward nearly a year old we moved to No. 26, a larger house rather nearer the church—a house which to this day seems to me a delightful one. It had three rooms with immense bay-windows looking right over the city and the hills. How the lights twinkled out at night; how the church bells rang up on Sundays; how thrilling was a fire in the town. Our day nursery looked out into the street, where the same cobbles pave the quiet road to-day: the baker's cart, about the only vehicle to pass, has not worn them out. The milkman had his yoke and his two tin pails, the baker his handcart: old Mrs. Pettigrew, the Somersetshire vegetable woman, who wore a tippet composed of six or seven shelving capes, had just a donkey and cart; Louisa Tamplin the washerwoman, deeply pitted with small-pox, only a clothes basket. A wonderful old

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lady lived opposite in a cottage—always kind, and so old. An affectionate and it may be added admiring congregation were all round. When we were only three and four years old we had “testimonials,” and went to a school feast at the Montague Hotel to be presented ; for the schools not being yet built were held in a tiny house. Edward’s was a beautifully bound *Pilgrim’s Progress* illustrated by Stothard, and mine a German walking doll. I can hear even now the shrill shouts of the children and the clash of their spoons and mugs beating the table when the doll, being wound up, began to walk. I was terrified and had to be carried out of the room.

Our father gave all his children little names for home use. Edward’s was Cudge. He was at that time a solemn, sturdy, sober child. “He was called Cudge because he looked like the word,” said his father. He was so backward in beginning to talk that they were a little anxious how it would be with him, and he had such a habit of falling down that he was called, as well as Cudge, Tumble-down Teddy. To me he was nothing but Teddy till he grew up. By the time he was four he was a well-developed, friendly boy. The earliest incident I can remember is his coming downstairs leaning his arm over the rail and getting the arm into the curl at the bottom and breaking it above the elbow. It was a dignity to be an invalid with his arm in a sling and be paid attention to by the indulgent congregation. “Please, ma’am, Mrs. Whitchurch’s kind regards and how is

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Master Teddy?" "Bring them up! bring them up!" cries the little boy, mistaking kind regards for orange jelly.

By this time little Margie had come upon the scene, followed by little Claire. I was very definitely the eldest, and was given a very grown-up position. I can remember going down Spring Hill habitually by myself all the way to Portland Square, a way which took one through town thoroughfares.

Mrs. Clifford wrote down some notes and recollections of her children's early days. From these the following extracts will serve to show something of the wisdom, gentleness and piety which directed the tiny wayward rivulet of Mary's infant life towards the course in which the full tide of later years would flow:—

Oct. 3rd, 1845.—I regret that I have deferred until the commencement of my little Mary's fourth year making any remarks regarding her, for many incidents have now probably escaped my recollection, which contained the germs of her future character.

She was, as an infant, remarkable for vivacity and manifested affection more than usual in young children: at six months old she was delighted with pictures, and at ten months recognised perfectly in them any forms with which she was acquainted; she was also fond of music. Her temper was exceedingly irritable at this age, and indeed has only lately

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been subdued through the blessing of God on firm and gentle management, avoidance as much as possible of trial to it, and occasional, tho' rare punishment. Her papa and I have sometimes found when she seemed in an irritable, fretful mood that all amusement failed to rouse her from it, and that mere rebuke was unavailing. We have in some such case completely changed the current of her thoughts and feelings by inflicting slight but real personal chastisement on her with the hand. I do not think, however, that this need be again resorted to, as she is now more susceptible to the pain of mental punishment. . . . She has always taken great pleasure in dolls; when only four or five months old she would nurse one; when a little older everything was turned into a doll; at fourteen or fifteen months I have seen her fondling with the utmost tenderness a quart bottle, hushing it to sleep and kissing it. She began to talk when about seventeen months old, and at nineteen, when her little brother was born, she could say many words: after this she very rapidly progressed, for at a year and ten months she could express herself very well.

I think she had her first idea of God (however obscure it might be) before she could speak plain: I told her that He was everywhere, and she would move her hands in all directions to express it. The day she was two years old I read the hymn to her in which the words occur: "I Thy little lamb would be, etc.," and asked her if she would ask Jesus to make her His dear lamb. She knelt down and prayed, "God make Baby a nice pretty lamb."

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I can scarcely be sufficiently thankful for the inestimable benefit to my Mary of which her little brother's companionship in the nursery has been. It has proved a complete check to the self-will and selfishness which would otherwise, I fear, have spoiled her character. She is now generally kind and forbearing to Edward, and ready, though with some struggle of temper, to give up her toys to him without the least resentment. We have lately noticed a fault in her which needs to be specially guarded against. One day she accidentally broke a jug when I was out of the room, and instantly in great alarm begged her papa to shut the door and not tell me about it. He directly brought her to me. Of course, I treated the accident lightly and tried to give her confidence in me. She told me, in answer to my question, "Why were you afraid to tell me?" "Because I thought you would not like it."

I have just taught her her letters, in which she takes much pleasure. I never saw anything greater than the absorbing delight with which she listens to simple stories about children either read or recited, particularly the latter. I shall be anxious to interest her in all matters of *fact*, as I perceive a tendency to imaginative enjoyments; her perceptions are acute, the least change in dress or furniture being noticed immediately. Her associations are most vivid, both verbal and local. Some months since I put a new muslin tippet on her; she accounted for its colour by saying, "I suppose it came from the Isle of Wight." I took her also a short time since into a street where she had not been for twelve months:

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she remembered immediately the occasion on which she was there at that time and reminded me of it. Indeed her memory has often surprised me. She is of a most social disposition, so much so that we have been obliged to allow her the society of other children rarely, as it is too exciting for her, and some months since she was invariably ill after it.

My little Edward as a baby was very unlike Mary, being very quiet and unexcitable, not at all forward in development, his temper was, however, much sweeter. . . .

I try to teach both my children to love the Sabbath, "The best of all the seven," and give them pictures which they like particularly on that day. The Pictorial Bible and Noah's Ark are enough to amuse them very much.

I have punished Mary this evening for telling an untruth, saying she had not been to the door when she had done so. I told her she should go to bed without my kissing her. She was much distressed, and after we had told her the consequences of this sin she asked pardon of God and of us, and seemed very sorry. Edward is very obedient, and can be trusted not to touch anything even when left alone if we have forbidden his doing so.

Mary when quite little was not at all afraid of the darkness, but she some weeks since showed some dread of it. Her fears were quite undefined. I do not think they originated in anything which she had heard. I did not think it well to leave her alone to suffer terrors which she had no strength of mind to combat, and therefore have on some occasions sat

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by her bedside in the darkness endeavouring to give her courage by reminding her of God's care, and also telling her how useful the darkness proves to our aching eyes. The plan has succeeded, and her fears seem quite overcome. She has always shown a great perception of analogies. When about two she remarked on listening to the church bells that "it was almost music;" a day or two since she told me she "was not fond of the darkness because it was like being blind." She compares every trifling object to something else she has seen.

She is remarkably fond of animals, and has to-day been in an ecstasy of delight at the sight of some little pigs.

January, 1846.— . . . Mary has a tendency to exaggeration which we must attend to. Yesterday I asked her to describe a Lascar who had stood at the window to her papa, and she said he had long hair reaching down to *his feet*, and rather coloured the whole too highly. I corrected the account and must be watchful.

Mamie asked me the other day what the Devil would think if any good people got into Hell. . . . She said to-night, "When Teddy is older he will be able to say his prayers, and then I shall not have the trouble of praying for him."

June, 1847.—Mamie will be able to read soon I believe; she is very anxious to do so. When I ask her what book she will read in she often says, "The Bible, mamma, it is the best book, for God wrote it, and He did not write any other." This morning she said, "The Bible is an easy book. God

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did not tell them to write difficult words because He knew that little children would like to read it."

July 20th, 1848.—I have been sitting by Mary's bed a little this evening. She said, "Mamma, it is very good of God to keep Papa from catching things when he goes to see sick people—it's a great mercy. How good it is of Him too to give me so many friends who can teach me about everything."

A day or two since she told me, "There is one thing I like in Roman Catholics." "What is that, dear?" "Why, mamma, you know, we are Christians, and we try to teach other people to be Christians too, and as they are Roman Catholics it is quite right that they should try to make other people so too."

She is, I trust, growing in obedient habits and self-control, and manifests much of what we hope may be the budding of grace. She is, however, often selfish and indolent.

Oct., 1848.—Mary seems to take great interest in all I try to teach her now, and manifests much common sense and decision of character. She is sometimes far too rough in manner and is not courteous to those in whom she feels little interest. I think this partly arises from shyness, however. She behaves very nicely at church now, and enjoys being at the Sunday School in the afternoon.

This ends Mrs. Clifford's account. Mary's own narrative continues:—

It was as happy a childhood as you can imagine. I suppose the secret lay in the character of both

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father and mother. They, especially our father, had much of the child nature. There was no obstacle to entire understanding of his children and entire sympathy with them, and therefore we children had more perfect naturalness and freedom than any children of that generation I know of. There really were no separate interests. Both father and mother were equally single-hearted in their love and service to God and their fellows, and the spirit of the commonplace was simply non-existent in their nature. We lived so simply that modern ordinary habits would have seemed foolish luxury. Bread and butter, milk and water, boiled rice instead of pudding with a hot dinner, no soup; very plain clothes (my mother never had any instinct for dress), a penny a week pocket money. We chose to go without butter and sugar at the time of the Irish famine.

We came into touch with the big interests because we heard them talked about at meals. There was not much nursery life. Our father could do his sermons with us in the room while we were little, and our mother was always there, and her original mind and wide range of thought must have constantly made my father's horizon larger. It is difficult to give an idea of her. Her letters are not like her; there is some mannerism in them. Her old home atmosphere must have been what in those days we children would have unhesitatingly called worldly. Two of our uncles were much in Bristol society. Aunt Charlotte who really made the home

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was very rightly in sympathy with them, and Uncle William, who was most like my mother, had married and gone away. Aunt Hawkins we loved, for she was always making us presents, and I am sure we all honoured her just as if she had been our grandmamma. Her Christmas sovereigns were always put by—mine in my silver-ringed purse, Teddie's in his gold-thread purse. My mother had intellectually grown up apart. She was not highly educated. She taught herself all she learnt after twelve years old, but people of an intellectual cast were always struck by her and attracted to her. Dr. Symonds, who attended her in her illness of 1849, was evidently much interested in her and used to lend her books. There was a quick perception of noble, adventurous thought, and a fearless simplicity of truth in her nature. In 1849, when I was seven years old, she entirely broke down in health and had an acute attack of hæmorrhage of the lungs. Dr. Symonds ordered her for two winters to Torquay, and though she lived twenty-one years, she was never more than a partial invalid. For this reason she always lived a more or less secluded life, and consequently read more and thought more and had more leisure for home life and all of her children, and for a few very deep friendships. I don't think she and my father had worldly experience enough. Certainly more might have been done educationally for some of us, but all ended well, and no one really suffered for it.

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Our father and she both had artistic instincts. He drew all his life, and it is rather interesting that the beautiful things in his pictures were generally the middle distances. His foregrounds were extremely amateurish and the distances more or less conventional, but the middle distances often sweet and tender and truthful. He simply loved fighting, and heartily enjoyed and often liked his enemies. One of my earliest recollections is of our father occupying himself at dinner between the meat and the pudding in cutting out little soldiers which he had previously painted, and which finally composed a model of the Battle of Waterloo, which was put up in the nursery in a very large glass case. He always stepped out like little David and fought public questions with a boldness and enthusiasm which rather frightened his weaker brethren. He was a most earnest Protestant, and took up the Roman controversy with vigour. He resisted scepticism and Mormonism publicly ; but I don't think these controversies ever made him a personal enemy. His keen sense of humour kept away conceit entirely and made him delight in his fellows. I don't think he had any idea of organisation or that parochial management interested him in the least. I am afraid that when I was old enough Aunt Lizzie and I undertook all that kind of thing that was attempted in St. Matthew's Parish. But at festivities, especially at our celebrated and original teas, especially the "Parents' Tea," he literally shone carrying the working people along with him

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in ecstasies. Anything more genial and winning than his addresses I never listened to, and the people never forgot them.

My first recollection, and it is as clear to me as if it had been last night, was being carried down in my father's arms, because I had waked up crying, from the night nursery into the warm, lamp-lighted study, and sitting there snug and comforted, indulged with a scrap of toasted bacon called enticingly "a mouse's tail." I remember often waking up in the night and seeing the old-fashioned lantern casting bosses of light on the ceiling. And I can remember staying at Portland Square as I often did, sleeping in Aunt Lizzie's room, and being waked up in great terror by the horrible noise of the fire rattle and the policeman's voice shouting, "*Fire!* in Milk Street," or wherever it was.

Our lives, Edward's and mine, were blended almost into one in those earliest years. I think our first joint memory was connected with the *Pilgrim's Progress*. We both thought the beautiful old white house, Redland Court,¹ with its terraces and pillars, was the realisation of the Palace Beautiful. That long elm avenue was our constant playground. We rolled joyfully down the sloping field and we made little gardens at the foot of certain of the trees. In those days it was a really beautiful place.

¹ Now Redland High School.

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Livermead (near Torquay) was the enchanted land of our childhood. In the summer of 1849 the doctor ordered our mother away to Torquay for the winter. This sudden calamity, as it must have seemed, called forth a burst of sympathy. I believe the people of the church smoothed every difficulty by their offerings. The Saunderses knew of lodgings at Livermead Cottage, and the mother and three children and Eliza the nurse were taken down by my father, and there Alfred was born in November.

Livermead Cottage was ideal. As it has vanished I will describe it. A long one-storied house, thatched roof, with its bay-windows opening to the ground. It faced the blue water of Torbay. Step out of the window, walk across the narrow lawn, stand amongst the tamarisk trees and lean over the low outward-curving wall, and look down into the clear water and watch the bass darting among the seaweed. Look over at the red sandstone cliff guarding the little clean sandy beach and see how the shelving rock invites you to climb round the western corner; and understand the low roar and boom of the tide, for there is the mystery and awe of Thunder Hole. But don't go down the wooden staircase leading to the beach yet. Walk west and compass the smiling field, with its broad bank for safety, and if it is rough weather and you are small, take your father's hand and venture round to the place where the swell in Thunder Hole underfoot makes the ground tremble and showers of spray wet you to the skin. I don't

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think in all the world a more perfect playground could be found. I had been left at home, as being seven years old education had to be remembered, and some kind friends offered to keep and instruct me. But I went when the early spring began, and Teddy was just five, and the new baby short-coated, and I shall never forget the rapture of content when I woke up that first morning. Whatever anxiety there was about our mother was not understood by us. Edward and I were together and comrades. Our father was a third and our mother at hand apparently always. I have no memory of being kept apart or restrained. Entire sympathy lasted through our childhood, natural comradeship, mutual joys. I don't think our parents were of an anxious disposition. All remembrances of them are happy. My father was a keen naturalist. The Torquay letters which belong to the second winter at Livermead give a picture of his interest and fun and imaginativeness. Not a single angry word or look can I recall. I suppose he was one of the sweetest-tempered men who ever lived. Edward was no doubt as a child very like him in disposition. He was a squarely built, not a pretty child, of a most sociable nature. He had the same simplicity of nature as our parents, and was as fond of flowers then as afterwards. He did not know shyness, and admired human beauty, especially feminine beauty, with an ardour that grew with his years. These qualities made him a companion and a pleasure to

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grown-up people. A certain old Mrs. Maddock (at least to me she appeared old and rather awful) used to take him out in her carriage. As they rolled along through Cockington Lane early in March little Teddy, sitting with his back to the horse, descried an early violet in the hedge.

"Oh, Mrs. Maddock, there is a VIOLET!" cries the little boy. "And instead of stopping the horses," Teddy came home to relate, "she only said, 'Very likely, my dear.'"

The "Torquay Letters" mentioned by Mary were written by Mr. Clifford to his children at home. They are elaborately illustrated with fine pen-and-ink drawings of the scenery and of every interesting natural object which he met with in his walks. The drawings are alive with figures of men and animals, and he and his wife appear in many of them; himself in tail coat and chimney-pot hat, and Mrs. Clifford, riding on her pony or donkey, in early-Victorian bonnet and shawl. The drawing which became a family classic is a hasty sketch of one such ride when Mamie and Teddy were there. From the lips of each individual proceed remarks. Mr. and Mrs. Clifford discourse mildly of the call they are going to pay. The donkey says: "My tail is uncomfortable. There's something on it." Teddy, clinging on behind his mother and sliding off: "Oh! I'm coming

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off! Mamie, don't *touch* the donkey." Mamie: "But it won't go if I don't beat it. Besides I *must* do *something*." Mamie is in a little poke bonnet and a long frock down to her ankles. Teddy too is in square cap, jacket and trousers like the children in "The Fairchild Family."

"Mamie, *don't!*" "But I *must* do *something*," became family bywords, and tell their own tale of Mamie's restless activity.

One day at dinner Teddy, at the end of saying grace in his usual reverent, very deliberate manner, opened his eyes and exclaimed, "Oh, Mamie! You oughtn't to have drunk *all* the froth off papa's porter while I was saying my holy prayer!"

Eliza the nurse, who lived to be nearly ninety, was a Moravian. She would relate many a tale of these early days with humour and pride, and in broadest Devonshire. Once at least she "had words" with another old lady whose memory of Mary did not go back farther than her white-haired middle-age, and who argued, or rather declared, that she must be more beautiful then than in her youth. Eliza would never allow this. One day she came to see Mary.

"She came upstairs to my little room," Mary wrote, "to arrange about a tea for the Old People next week. She looked at the old photograph of us when we were young. 'Ah,' she said, 'you 'm not so pretty as you was then. Somebody asked me the other

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day if you was prettier when you was young than you be now, and I said, ‘*Ten times prettier—little black curls.*’ ”

Eliza also enjoyed describing Mary as the Lady Bountiful of the parish, giving away soup that had been made, very good and strong, by Eliza herself.

There were a good many family “annals” written by the brothers and sisters about their childhood. They give an impression of great freedom and overflowing high spirits. They frankly admit that “family pride was the fault they had most toleration for.” When they were children “Mamie and Teddy” composed endless romances which they related to each other, and in which their favourite ninepins figured as heroes and heroines of extremely aristocratic birth and haughty manners. This ideal was sometimes imitated in practice.

“Did I ever tell you,” wrote Mary to a niece some sixty years later, “how when Uncle Ned and I were children about six or seven years old one of our quite favourite virtues was contempt, and how we made poor N. carry a large heavy stone in the hood of her cloak? (Cloaks with hoods had just become the fashion and I had not got one).”

Mary went for a short time to a little private school kept by two Miss Elses, but the greater part of her early education was given her by her mother,

until at the age of thirteen she went to a school of which Miss Millard was mistress, at 1 Worcester Terrace. It was a first-class school according to the standards of the day. Her conduct book or "daily register" of one quarter has been kept. On some pages a text is written in the margin by Miss Millard, *e.g.* "Order my steps in Thy word ; let not iniquity have dominion over me. Ps. 119. 133." Most of the entries are "Attentive" or "Very Well," except the report of a Latin lesson. Here, alas ! we read, "Lesson not prepared and old lessons giddily said." "Miss M. had to send Mary again from the class. This is very careless and 'don't care'." At this point, however, a new leaf is turned over, for the next week's remarks are "Very Good," "Extremely Well."

The great source of inspiration at Miss Millard's school was the teaching of Mr. Joseph Morris, who came twice a week from Bath to lecture on History and English Literature. To the end of her life Mary looked back with pleasure and gratitude to these lectures.

Those who knew Mary in later years, thinking of the atmosphere of calm strength and the quick sympathy which were the first things people noticed about her, might be tempted to think that her childish faults had dropped away from her easily, as the rejected calyx falls from the opening flower ; but enough remains of her private diary and intimate letters to show that they were overcome rather by the faithful seeking of divine things and unrelenting self-discipline.



MARY WITH HER FATHER AND MOTHER.

CHAPTER II

THE "OLD MAID BOOK"

In her utmost lightness there is truth and often she speaks
lightly,

Has a grace in being gay which even mournful souls
approve ;

For the root of some grave earnest thought is understruck
so rightly

As to justify the foliage and the waving flowers above.

E. B. BROWNING.

As Mary grew out of childhood the chief and pervading influence in her life was her mother. Mary was often away from home visiting friends, and Mrs. Clifford stayed at Torquay or Weston-super-Mare for her health, so that many letters passed between them. On Mary's fourteenth birthday (Sept. 8th, 1856) her mother wrote saying :—

It seems the commencement of another portion of life. Childhood's farewell is spoken, and all the powers, the enjoyments, and the responsibilities of youth are come. . . .

I often feel that you are in a peculiar position needing peculiar grace to meet its responsibilities. There are many who attend dear papa's ministry who look carefully at the character and conduct of his children. You know that "faithful children"

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{Titus i. 6) are mentioned as one of the things absolutely required for the usefulness of a minister. Now it is our earnest desire that you may at school and at all other places act in such a way as to show what the principles you have been taught at home are. Avoid all foolish and trifling conversation, all satirical remarks on the persons around you. Seek, too, *earnestness* in the work now given you to do for God, I mean your own education. The consciousness that you are working for God will make many a dull task interesting, many a difficult one easy. Try to gain gentleness of manner, which always greatly commends right principles to others. I will not say more now, but will end this little Birthday note by the prayer that the very God of peace may sanctify you wholly, and that your whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. v. 23).

Ever, dearest child, your loving Mother,

EMILY CLIFFORD.

These wishes may be followed here by another birthday letter which must have been written a few years later, but as Mrs. Clifford's letters are often only headed by the name and hour of the day, it is difficult to assign them to the years to which they belong :—

Sept. 7th.

My beloved child, I have but a few moments in which to write to you, but no time would be enough to express half what is in my heart towards you for your birthday. May God who gave you to us make you more and more to grow up into His own likeness.

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May you walk more closely and carefully with Him, and delight year by year more fully in His blessed service. My darling, He has blessed us exceedingly in you, and on this anniversary of your birth which is coming, I desire to have a heart of thankful joy towards Him, and a deep earnest spirit of supplication for you.

I must not write more or I shall have no breathing of air before the Browns come, which I know you would disapprove . . .

I have ordered *Goulburn on Scripture Study* for you, my dear one, but shall not send it by post.

The dear love of everyone.

Ever your own Mother,

EMILY CLIFFORD.

Mary's constant companion was her brother Edward who was as full of high spirits and sociability as herself. He had an intense love of beauty, which filled him with eager desire for the life of an artist.

In these years also began her earliest and longest friendship. Constance Thompson was a year older than Mary. They met first when, as little girls of eight and nine years old, they stayed with their godmothers, the two Miss Hillhouses, at Herne Hill, for the opening of the great Exhibition of 1851, and the thread of their love and intimacy is woven into the whole of Mary's life ; for this friend was one in ten thousand, able to give to Mary as much as she received from her, and to others giving, like Mary herself, more than any can hope to repay. Miss Thompson married in 1866 Dr. Cholmeley, Fellow

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of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Vicar of Findon in Sussex. Some of Mary's happiest memories were of that uniquely interesting household. The Doctor was a man of profound intellect and learning, with a beautifully simple, child-like mind. Among his many gifts was his love and understanding of animals and birds. In a letter describing his home Mary wrote: "All about are snug little bark boxes and bits of root, and a comfortable open cage, and the birds come and build there, and Rover (the big black retriever) takes care of them like a mounted policeman."

By a sad misfortune all Mary's early letters to her friend Mrs. Cholmeley were lost or destroyed, and hardly any to her brother Edward have been kept, so that we are without what would certainly have been some of the most interesting records of her growing mind, and are left to infer from references in other letters and from the events of her life what these two friendships were to her.

Among the most stimulating incidents of her girlhood were the occasional visits of her aunt, Miss Elizabeth Clifford, who lived in France and had interesting reminiscences of contemporary French history, including adventures in the Revolution of 1848, as well as many stories of social life. She had been governess to a beautiful young French girl called Claire Azvedos, and when Mlle. Claire at the age of nineteen married M. de la Hante, she refused to be separated from her English friend, and Miss Elizabeth Clifford remained as an honoured member of the family till her death some twenty years

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later. She was always called Grandmother by Mme. de la Hante's children, and though a devout Protestant in a Roman Catholic family, she and her beloved de la Hantes never came into collision on matters of religion. She respected their piety and they hers. She had indeed a wonderful charity and power of seeing and saying the best of everything. When she visited her brother's home in Bristol she was an elderly lady with pale complexion, delicate aquiline features, two cream-white side curls, white lace caps, and a gold chain with a bunch of fascinating charms, all of a style unmistakably French and not English. French too, in style and accent, was her vivid and piquant conversation. She and Mary's mother were dear and intimate friends and constant correspondents. After her death Mary and her father at the invitation of the de la Hantes went to Paris and stayed some days with them with great enjoyment.

At the age of nineteen Mary had a serious illness and nearly died of diphtheria. No doubt the dangers of those days from ignorance of sanitary principles were great. For many years after this there are frequent references in her letters to her bad throats, and in the end the whole family had to be distributed among the houses of hospitable parishioners while the defective drains of the Vicar's house were put right. There is not much about her illness in the old letters that have been kept, and nothing to indicate that it marked any change in the steady development of her character. It may have helped, however, to deepen her serious outlook on life.

When she was just twenty years old she began to

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write in a little note-book some of her private thoughts and aspirations. She called the little book "Old Maid Book." It begins with a description of her father's study, the centre of their family life, and is dated at the house in Highbury Place, Kingsdown, where the family had moved while Mary was still a child. The house was in the road which in one direction, as St. Michael's Hill, drops steeply and picturesquely down into Bristol, and in the other extends into Hampton Road, which led in those days between hedges and fields up towards Durdham Down.

Mary's delight in all the details of the room and the imagination with which she personifies the things around her were the outcome of her humour and *joie de vivre*. She felt the significance of little things and their spiritual value. Nothing in life was dull to her mind.

OLD MAID BOOK.

(Private.)

I HIGHBURY PLACE,

Monday, Oct. 6th, 1862.

I can hear voices and footsteps upstairs—Papa and Mama going to bed. It is only half-past nine, but Papa has had an attack of lumbago and Mama is not very well.

I am sitting in the study this dull warm October evening, with the basket-grate fire slowly twittering out, deader and greyer every minute. There is Cleopatra's Needle on the mantelpiece and the glass

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shade with the tigers' skulls, and other usefals and ornamentals. There are two tall thin book-cases, the left-hand one with its row of untrodden Allisons, and Mama's work-basket on the lowest shelf ; but it is otherwise ennobled by holding my grandfather's two swords and their scabbards, and another, a Crimean veteran which came home from the wars with some uncomfortable stains which Mama barbarously had cleaned off with plate powder. On the other side is Papa's own peculiar book-case, dotted over with nails and contrivances to one's heart's content : two eyeglasses (one of them makes jacky-lanterns on the wall at church), one boot-jack, two letter-nippers, great shears, little bag, ruler, "hand-nail," general nail, and all his fresh vigorous books, with earnest friendly faces always watching him at his work. His new crimson arm-chair with a great promiscuously made-up parcel to make it comfortable, and his writing and study table, leaning up, with his Bible, just closed, upon it ; his store table close by with the paper box, but no newspapers as it is Monday ; the big book-case opposite the fire-place, with all the huge learned books I have known since I was a baby, one or two of which were once lifted out that little me might be fitted into their place : old Johnson, *Caryl on Job*, *Goodwin's Works*, Rapin's *History of England*. I don't know many of them personally, but I have the greatest veneration for them all, and know plenty of them imaginatively. That long row of brown ones up there with paper titles always gives me an idea of the Majesty of Dulness. That splendid shelf of red must feel themselves quite demeaned by their neighbours, or might so feel, but they are clearly good-natured and live happily in the knowledge of their expensive character.

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Every shade of brown and a mingling of purple fill all the upper shelves, except in one spot where one eccentric primrose-coloured volume looks boldly out. I never could understand that book, how he came there among such a dowdy set, bold and cheerful in such depressing company.

I am sitting on the sofa with my back to another book-case, where live the standard works, stout well-to-do fellows, shining with *mens conscia recti*: cyclopædias, essays, histories, and natural histories; all useful and well-favoured. There are three slight shelves which contain the lighter literature, Captain Mayne Reid's books, tales, children's stories—all with lively covers and half smiling faces.

Round the room are the pictures: dear old Mr. Biddulph whose likeness has so grown into my head that I could hardly criticise it any more than I could Teddy; a crayon head of me; good Dr. Symonds; a sweet little valley, stretching away blue and sunny beyond the green river in front; a water-colour by the door which is often being changed. Then above my head is the trophy of North American Indian bows and arrows and New Zealand fishing apparatus, oars, rudders and so on. Out by the window are paper portfolios and the little tea table and the brackets, one with Robertson's *Sketches* upon it, and the other with the microscope; while Aunt Lizzie's little clock ticks on, old Time stepping, stepping on through day and night, while the world's life lives on till the end cometh.

I want to make observations in this book, which with God's aid may help me to keep clear of some every-day faults and failings, when I come to be an Old Maid, if that ever does come.

I want to learn to cultivate the little thoughtful-

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nesses that add to our common pleasantness and make us welcome Christians.

May God our Saviour lead me to do this thoughtfully, wisely, observingly, and above all things lovingly, for His Son Jesus Christ's dear sake. Amen.

"As Thou hast sent Me into the world even so have I also sent them into the world." John xvii. 18.

A welcome old maid is a decidedly pleasant person. But to be thoroughly and always "well come" involves a great deal.

Though an old maid hardly ever has one to love her chiefly on earth, yet this must not make her consider herself chiefly, as it is likely to do.

I. Above all things she must not be jealous. If one is surpassed in anything of course it is mortifying, but, to take the lowest view, don't make oneself a fool by remarking on it by manner or word. Remember that it is very likely our own fault. It may be a sharp trial sent from God.

II. Don't be over-sensitive, touchy. One cannot be welcome unless one takes people on their bright side, and downright *won't* see their shades and even blots, *i.e.* as far as one's conduct to them goes.

III. Try and determine with God's help not to be low-spirited. Keep up, if possible, stiff reading and regular study. And, oh! my dear self, do be active, and not self-indulgent. Get up early, and have many immediate objects of interest besides your own Friends, if well and possible. But don't forget that *they* are your first duty. These outward things help to keep up a cheery heart and head.

IV. Don't be meddlesome. Very few old maids have a right to speak with authority to anyone ;

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and even when one has, how much pleasanter gentle "Will you's?" are. Old boys and girls especially hate being dictated to even by an affectionate aunt. So try not to see their disagreeable awkwardness, and never attack them directly, if you can help it.

Don't find fault more than one time in twenty that you see it.

V. Don't be too particular about yourself. As a counteracting rule, remember that "Hearty-living life for six years is better than coddled-up life for twelve."

VI. Don't wear out your welcome. Rather come to see people too seldom than too often. Never come at queer times, at meals, while people are at business; and make it a special matter of prayer that you may have quick perceptions; cultivate them.

VII. If one is rich (which isn't likely!) make plenty of presents; it is such a pleasure to give and to *get* them!!

The real root of all these is, to be thoroughly self-forgetful and always "Looking unto Jesus."

Careful less to serve Thee much
Than to please Thee perfectly.

* * * * *

Mary was not given to introspection; her natural activity and out-going affection saved her from this. The following passage is an exception:—

March 28th and April 1st, 1863.

It is curious that I should begin a work I have long been trying to do—to put down some thoughts

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about myself—now that I am feeling so wonderfully flat and uninteresting. I have no good reason for being uninteresting just now, but I know I am. I am living just what ought to be the ideal of quiet home life, very free from excitement and yet with a moderate quantity of work in hand. Now this ought not to make one flat, or let one be flat, but so it is. . . .

I should like to know positively and relatively what I am. Others can only tell what my outside is compared with the outsides of people in general. I can only tell what I am in myself and to myself. . . .

Perhaps the groundwork of my mind is love of logical realisations. As in about a fortnight I shall have forgotten what this means, I explain to myself that it is the habit I have acquired, or that I have developed into, of thinking over something I wish to do or become, and carrying it out methodically, slowly and steadily, without suffering circumstances to disturb it. I am naturally persevering and fond of work, though opposed to this there is an inertia which under favouring circumstances grows rapidly. "I must do something," said as I was walking along industriously beating the donkey thirteen years ago—this with good training has become a habit of mind. Yet I am lazy in body and inclined to self-indulgence. I am selfish in little things, and too imperious to the little ones at home. This last proceeds partly from Edward and I having always been treated emphatically as elder ones, and having lived very much together, apart from the others.

I am strong-willed with those I think inferior, but too easily led by any whom I think above me. This

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is the result of my being very reflective.¹ I always insensibly catch the peculiarities of mind of those with whom I am, when I admire or reverence them, and then their opinions exercise undue influence over me. I do not exactly worship my friends, but I love, honour and cherish them in my inmost heart, almost wrongly sometimes. I live in them, which is not right.

I am no genius, though I am clever enough to love and enter into a great deal of the beauty of the world, but I can better appreciate than discover, and I suppose this is why it is so exquisitely pleasant to me to be with those who have different fields of mind to my own.

Some years ago, before I went to school, I used greatly to underrate my intellectual powers; now I know I am equal to any ordinary work, and from education as well as nature superior in mind and tastes to many girls of my own age; but I see more and more clearly certain deficiencies in originality, ready sympathy and activity, which may to some extent be overcome. There is also a reserve which ought to be steadily checked from interfering with home happiness.

I am honestly sure, too, that many people think me far more good than I am. This is humiliating. My *method* of carrying out plans for myself often carries me far beyond the spirit of the effort. People see the one and think the other must exist behind it. How I wish it did. There is some danger of my very religion becoming too much simple method and habit. From this point of view I am glad of anything which

¹ *i.e.* impressionable.

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takes me out of my everyday track of thought and action.

What I want is an inward spring of intense life, and that the chief source should be from above. "All my fresh springs are in Thee."

* * * * *

May Day, 1863.

This will not look well on paper, at least it cannot give to anyone else's mind an idea of the beauty of the fields this morning.

Ted and I went out soon after 8 o'clock and made for Redland Common. It was a bright morning and one generally feels fresh at that time. We talked at first about ordinary things and people, and wondered about the necessity of change as an intellectual stimulant. Ted thought it excusable on the plea of variety. I thought it bad in principle as an incentive to mere excitement.

When we got to the Common we talked about going to parties. Dancing and balls were out of the question for us in every way. Musical parties became very frivolous if multiplied. We should like to go to intellectual parties like Dr. S's. [Symonds]. But how far will such society agree with being decided in religion? Can people serve God thoroughly and still enjoy society rationally? (Of course we cannot do two things at once, but can we heartily give up our life to God and still enjoy society? I think so, if we conscientiously find we can be moderate.)

But as we went on the fields became too lovely for us to talk about anything so far away as evening parties. It was the very type of a May morning. And it really seemed to make us feel quite good. Every-

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thing was so exquisitely, so tenderly good and happy, that for a little while one's earthly mind seemed to breathe in the spirit of it. The sky was light blue—a morning sky without any clouds—the air was nearly still, and cool and warm at the same time; it seemed to be trying to express what everything else was saying. The sky was light blue and the trees were the very gentlest, youngest green you can think, except here and there where was some strange golden foliage, of closed buds or dry leaves, or a deep green fir, or brown trunk. The light green was so lovable, it drank in the sunshine with such delight, that one hardly remembered at first the grass under our feet. But there it was, in its rich cool verdure spotted and starred with daisies and buttercups and those old friends the dandelions. And then there was an everlasting chorus of skylarks overhead, and now and then we heard a cuckoo, or some faint church bells from the city or from Westbury, and then the musical tinkle of a sheep-bell.

We did not meet one human creature, which was delightful. I don't think my thoughts have felt so free for a long, long time. We did not talk much. It is the author of *John Halifax* who says that the test of real friendship is to be able to stay long with your friend without feeling obliged to talk for talking's sake.

Ted wanted to find a bird's nest to draw, but though we startled some birds we did not get a nest. It was a good thing I was with Ted or I don't know when he would have come home, and there is no knowing what I might have fancied about him as I sat at home reading.

As we came down the last field the shadows of the trees lay along the grass in the wonderfully beautiful

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way that always comes to me as the type of green fields and walks when Ted and I were little.

So we went home, and I read Macaulay to Ted for about an hour while he drew a skeleton, and then he went to the School of Art.

The little book, as no doubt an "Old Maid Book" should be, is more full of other people than of herself. If she was interested in inanimate things, far more deeply and sympathetically did she care for everything in the lives of the people she loved. There are character sketches of her brother Edward and of two or three other friends, and there is an account of the doubts and difficulties of Edward's choice between the life of an artist and that of a clergyman, when the wise advice of his cousin Elizabeth Essex (Mrs. Teulon) did more than anything else to decide his future for him.

June 21st, 1866, Thursday.

The last ten days have been very exciting and interesting to me. A few days after Edward came home a month ago we spent the day at Abbot's Leigh. Edward and Mr. A. walked together each way and I was surprised to see that they cared for each other, being so different in nature and tastes. Mr. A. is a man of one idea, given up entirely to God, single minded and simple hearted—without much expansive power, hardly capable of seeing two sides of a question—yet gentle and affectionate and thoughtful and in all things a gentleman.

Edward told me just after we were at Weston that Mr. A. had in this walk said plainly "and yet quite

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politely" that Edward ought not as a Christian to remain an artist. And "he seemed quite surprised," Edward said, "to hear that I considered it a duty to remain so—from the highest point of view."

About that day week, however—on Tuesday—Edward sat painting in the dining-room, and I brought my work and sat behind him in the easy-chair. And then after a minute or two he said, "I have had another talk with Mr. A." "Did you come to any point?" I asked rather curiously. He only said, "I think I know pretty well in my own mind how it will end."

I knew and felt all over me that moment that he had made his decision. It was quite overwhelming. The only thing that I can remember saying was, "Well, I am glad you should do it while you still love Art and that you don't do it because it has lost its freshness."

For the greatness of the sacrifice seemed to take up every place in my thoughts. He had become so entirely and unreservedly in love with Art—had given it all his life and affection and power, and it had developed him into such a delightful man—that unless he had said it I *could* not have believed it. And then I was so proud of him and felt his work such a new field of interest and ideas. It seemed to be giving up everything. I could hardly bear to think of it—even to give him up to our Lord. And then I thought how I had prayed earnestly the first Sunday he came home that he might come and teach the boys at school, and what a thrill of joy I had had when he suddenly came down with his Bible in his hand to go. And how I had thought his life outwardly worldly and feared that he might lose his love to our Lord. And how I had thought

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his school in Art one which was dangerous, because it seemed to go a little way into the Truth and then to stop and wall itself in, and to my mind become somewhat narrow and hard and unbelieving and self-sufficient. And then I thought what a short, imperfect thing life is here, and what a noble satisfying thing it would be to consecrate one's whole life and powers unreservedly to Him. But yet I could not get over the feeling of a great loss. It made me cry a great deal, particularly when I went to bed, and Mama asked me the next day why I looked so distressed.

And then I could not decide whether it was a duty to leave his chosen profession which God had certainly pointed out—I had always thought—four years ago.

And mixed up with these came all sorts of difficulties when he had told Papa and Mama. Papa would not hear of his being a missionary as Edward had intended. If he went into the Church his whole temperament pointed out England as the right field of his labour. Therefore he must go to college and nearly five years of study would be necessary—some of his best years.

Then we had lost a good deal of money, and was it right or even possible to go to the expense?

And how was he fitted for the ministry? I did not think so much of that objection then, believing that he had powers which had not been brought out yet; he had so often surprised us in doing new kinds of things. Would he ever be able to subscribe to the Prayer Book?

But on Saturday morning came Lizzie's letter, taking a view which I had not taken before. Had he a right to leave the work which God had plainly

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given him to do among the artists and which he was doing well? Would he neglect and forsake the little spot where God had already blessed his labour?

It was put so strongly and wisely and intensely that we were all greatly struck. I had not realised that he was so useful before, or it would have been a great comfort to me. It is so different to see a person daily and hear all details and trifles (as Lizzie does), to getting scraps in letters written in a hurry and afterwards long stories about the art students.

Edward was almost in agony. All the giving up came over again, and he was thrown into the most dreadful doubts. This was quite right and best; however it ends, we owe a great deal to Lizzie.

Now began a sort of trial of strength between the two sides, Mr. A. on one—not giving an inch—Lizzie on the other, writing the most wonderfully clever letters every day. It quite makes me believe that you can in certain circumstances do as much by writing as by speaking, if not more.

I fear to write down how it will end though I fancy I know, and I most earnestly pray God will decide it Himself and leave us without a painful doubt on our minds.

Edward Clifford was destined to fulfil much of both these expectations. After some ten years of whole-hearted and successful devotion to his painting, he began to take part in mission work in the East End of London, and soon afterwards joined Mr. Wilson Carlile and became the first Honorary Evangelistic Secretary of the Church Army. From the years when, with Mr. Carlile and his little band,

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he faced the mob violence of the rough London crowds, to the age of sixty when he gave up his official position (though not his close practical interest) in the Church Army, his artistic and social gifts were subordinated to the service of his evangelical work.

The most interesting of the personal sketches in the "Old Maid Book" is one of Miss Catherine Macready, daughter of the great actor. "Katie" and her younger sister were frequent visitors in Mary's home ; she loved and admired Mrs. Clifford and wrote of the house in Highbury Place as "my second home" ; while on the other hand her wit, her charm, and her brilliant dramatic and musical gifts delighted and fascinated her friends. At the end of 1862 Mary and Edward paid a memorable visit to Mr. Macready's house in Cheltenham. Mary wrote :—

Jan. 2nd, 1863.—I want to describe K. M., and I find I can hardly distinguish her through my own haze of pleasure in her. In person I know she is short and graceful and expressive to the last degree. Her face is plain, and becomes interesting, until one gets to look at it as a treat. She has all the confidence and vividness that dramatic talent gives, and though she dresses commonly, may do anything she likes.

Her mind is intensely impressive. Sometimes it is glowing with earnestness and delight—fun, poetry or religion ; and then a cold draught will blow across it or something will shut out the supply of air, and the fire will die out and leave the hearth-stone very cold ; and by the hearth-stone I mean her outer self. For this reason she is sometimes all enjoyment or

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affection or seriousness, and at others depressed or cross or dull.

You feel that she has been a great deal with high and refined minds, and this is true both as regards men and books. While she is talking you see all sorts of new vistas of thought, showing you long avenues which *you* have never trodden. Mingled with this is the feeling that she enjoys you and believes in you as much as you do in yourself, and admires you more. Her way of thinking is not common and yet it is generally simple and beautiful. She has become a Christian after holding rationalistic views for some years, and though she retains her habits of thought and the breadth and refinement that deep and rather troubled study have given her, yet she comes to the Bible willing and waiting to learn. I think she is too fastidious in matters of religious taste and too unmindful of her responsibility and influence, but I do believe she will be taught by Him Who is her Saviour, and will go on to the fulness of His truth.

After a year the entries in the "Old Maid Book" cease for a while. But nine years later Mary begins to use it to put down New Year thoughts on each thirty-first of December, and the pages become little milestones, carrying on the story of her life till 1904, when the book is full. But always on each New Year's Eve her mind and her heart are occupied rather with those she loves than with herself or her work.

Owing to Mrs. Clifford's ill-health, Mary became the manager of the household from the time she left

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school. All the family housekeeping, the mending, and a good deal of the practical mothering of her five younger brothers and sisters, beside the care of the invalid mother, were in her hands. Her natural love of managing had plenty of scope, and she was depended on, laughed at, and obeyed as the family tyrant.

With her gift for organising and her real interest in people and sympathy with their needs, she soon took her share with her Aunt Elizabeth Hassell in all the parish work. The Sunday School must have been very full of interest and life, and the parish was treated as the outer circle of the Vicar's family. In Mary's letters family and parish news are mingled together with no trace of feeling that the outside cares were a burden.

Here is one, a birthday letter written to her sister Margaret :—

KINGSDOWN,
Friday, June 23rd, 1865.

SWEETEST MIDGE,

You are a very glorious child. You are now, love, just nineteen. My best love to you, and I congratulate us all. Alfred is just gone out of the room from reading *Kenilworth* to me, while I renovate a crinoline. It is very curious that while the days are so long they seem less able to accommodate one with time than at ordinary lengths. One goes out early and that breaks up the morning. Then Pop's¹ lessons come, and then mountains of work and

¹ One of the pet names of Agnes, the youngest of the family.

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visitors and disturbances ; and every evening has some sort of engagement.

We are so delighted that you are enjoying your visit. You don't seem to be so overcome with the heat as we are. We sit in the garden a good part of the day—in the shade at the bottom, having tea out there sometimes. Yesterday evening my school-children came to tea, and we spread it out on the grass on a table-cloth, and though we did not exactly “boil our kettle” (a mere metaphor) we insisted on having no chairs, and other nice little picnic discomforts. The repast was at once simple and elegant and not expensive. Two sorts of Fool, gooseberry and currant, a mound of cake, four plates of split rolls spread with those well-known condiments, marmalade, rhubarb jam and butter ; sixteen cherries at opposite corners and a handful of currants between each—for effect of colour—and plenty of china.

After tea the children watered the garden with the tin kettles and spent an exceedingly pleasant evening.

Tenderest love to Ted and you.

MAMIE.

“Sixteen cherries at opposite corners, and a handful of currants between each—for effect of colour.” It was always her way thus to add a touch of beauty to everything she did, for rich friends and poor, all alike. She loved beauty and she loved colour.

Nor was humour lacking : indeed, in all her work the twin graces of humility and humour saved her from mistakes and guarded her sense of proportion. She was once drawing up a report of some work and preparing it for the printer under her mother's

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direction. "Put a footnote to that statement," said Mrs. Clifford, "and say, 'A fact.''" "Shall I put 'one of these statements is a fact'?" asked Mary mischievously.

Mary inherited her sense of fun from her father. Much occupied as both of them were by the serious things of life, when they were together the lighter side was irrepressible. There was a continual effervescence of banter and fun between them. Here is the postscript of a nonsense letter from "the Dad" to his daughter Margaret: he calls it—

Codicil to my note.—Mamie has been behaving abominably. Ted sent *four* partridges to me. Mind *four*. One, however, was to go to Aunt Liz, but the rest we were enjoined to eat at home. Well, when I went down to dinner there were only *two*. Where's the other one? says I. There are only two, Pa, says Mamie. But there were three, says I. Wicked silence followed. *You have sent one to that girl Letitia*, says I. Roars of wicked laughter. *What are you going to do with that beautiful two-thirds of that partridge that you've got on that plate?* says I. It's going to Florence Berry, says Mamie. *You've got no right to give away my partridges.* says I. Roars of wicked laughter. And it was sent!!! Is that conduct or is it not, I want to know?

Mrs. Mirrlees has sent a splendid hare to be eaten on Monday. Now mind, they will give me an underdone wing, see if they don't. However, we are going to supper now and so I must conclude, my dear little Twidge.

Ever your loving paternal relative,

J. B. CLIFFORD.

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The "conduct" described in this letter always was Mary's to the end of her life. Friends often sent her presents of game or fruit, and she never received one without immediately giving or sending a portion to anyone she thought would specially enjoy it. The friend to whom a partridge was sent on this occasion was Miss Anna Letitia Waring, the writer of many beautiful, mystical hymns.

Mr. Clifford's early association with Fulneck gave him and his family an affectionate interest in the Moravian Church,¹ and it appears in the following letter written when Mary was staying with her father's sister in Clifton.

To Alfred Clifford.

ARLINGTON VILLAS, 1871.

MY FAIREST ALFRED,

Yesterday was a Niagara for dampness—I put on my Sunday things and was ready to start for Stoke when down it came, roaring and tearing like a bull of Bashan. I watched, and then read the Psalms to Aunt Mary, but there was not much difference, so I had to choose between St. John's and the little Moravian Chapel, *which* I chose the last, and got in just in time: such a nice tidy tiny place with open seats. Someone was playing "Days and moments quickly flying" very beautifully on the harmonium (as a voluntary) when I went in. Mr. Townsend saw me and whispered, "Go up higher" (for I had taken a very lowly place), and lent me books. The liturgy is *exceedingly* touching and full of beauty. You know they get up very frequently and sing four or six lines of praise, to music which they all know, and then kneel down again. Then

¹ See note at end of chapter.

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came two lessons and there were several hymns, and quite a short extemporary prayer before the sermon. And we went out to "Hark, hark, my soul." The tone of the service is decidedly high, though its simplicity is entire.

Mary and her brothers and sisters gave little musical parties which were thoroughly enjoyed by themselves and their friends, Mary had an unusually sweet and expressive voice. In after years she described how they used to sing together. Edward had "a strong high voice"; Margaret "a lovely mezzo one, like her father's, which was tenor and very musical"; Mary herself sang alto, and so did their Aunt Elizabeth Hassell, and Alfred soprano; while "Claire and mother listened, which is an important part."

Edward Clifford had begun to study painting at the Bristol School of Art, and Mary's letters frequently mention him: "Ted has been painting in his ordinary chastenedly exuberant state, while I read to him of the excellent Plato and did accounts and looked over the clean linen,—all nice womanly things to do"; or, "Dearest Edwy is painting a lovely picture of a young man with so little on except a sword and an expression."

Soon Edward was admitted as a student at the Royal Academy and went to live in London; there he came into contact with the Pre-Raphaelite School of Artists and was an ardent admirer and disciple of Burne-Jones. Mr. Robert Bateman, himself then a student, remembers Edward one

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day bringing his sister Mary to introduce her to his artist friends. "Who is that beautiful young lady?" someone asked when they had gone. "She is exactly like a moderator lamp!" The moderator lamp represented to the speaker something beautifully and softly radiant, in contrast to the flaring gas which was then coming into use.

Alfred Clifford was ordained Priest in 1873. Mary was at his ordination at Nottingham, where he was assistant curate to the Rev. George Thornton. In 1874 he went to India under the Church Missionary Society, and was soon placed in charge of the Old Church, Calcutta.

The four sisters were left at home, busy with work at home and in the parish.

Mary loved her sister Claire's paintings. They were full of the poetry of trees and fields, still water and flocks of sheep. They have a feeling of mystery which carries the mind far beyond the picture on which one's eyes rest. Mrs. J. A. Symonds once wrote to Mary (1877): "I wanted you at Sutton Court; tell Claire there is an old red stone battlemented wall covered with ivy and fig-trees, with red valerian all along the top, and tall white lilies and damask roses and sweet-williams underneath, which is just like the dreamland she goes into when she paints." Margaret Clifford also painted with great beauty and delicacy; she was fond of drawing a flower-sprinkled bit of turf seen in bird's-eye view, bringing out the form and individuality of each tiny flower. Mary herself did not begin to paint till late in life. At this time she often embroidered

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little field flowers in silk or wool with much the same feeling as Margaret's paintings.

Agnes, the youngest, who was still a child when her brothers and sisters were growing up, and when the mother was living the retired life of an invalid, was Mary's special care. On her she spent infinite thought and anxiety, for Poppy, as she was called, was by no means easy to bring up. She was delicate in health, and bursting with original ideas which she carried out with restless activity. Without doubt she was an *enfant terrible*. A visitor being in the house, boiled eggs were one day added to the simple breakfast fare. In comes Poppy, exclaiming to the embarrassment of her elder brothers and sisters, "What's all this grandeur? Eggs for breakfast!" On another occasion the deep bell of St. Matthew's was heard clanging over the parish with a slow and strange irregularity. A much-respected Nonconformist Minister in the neighbourhood had died, and Poppy, indignant that public honour was not being done him by the tolling of the bell, had determined to do it herself, and was doing it. She was always young in heart and mind and she loved to be with young people. Her friendship for them had something of the quality of an elder brother's. She was a lover of animals and had unusual practical abilities, and she was as clever with her hands and with mechanical contrivances as any boy. Her clear brown eyes and healthy complexion, as well as her serviceable clothes and sturdy boots, testified to the open-air life which she loved. Though warmly affectionate she was impatient of control, but as

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she grew older her vehement temperament was curbed and softened by a deep and earnest religious faith, and her work in Girls' and Boys' Clubs, and in the missions in which she took part, was marked by real spiritual power.

Mrs. Clifford died in 1870. Mary was with her at Weston-super-Mare, and after the long years of invalid life the end came suddenly. Mary wrote of her to her friend Mrs. Arthur Browne :—

It was very sweet of your dear mother—she sent me two notes from my darling mother received this year. They gave me the feeling of her so *beautifully*, a sort of tender, delicate, spreading love. This fierce cold reminds me constantly how thankful I am that she is out of it. It was such suffering to her, such terrible anxiety to us. Even now I often feel it was God's will that no doctor should be with us when she passed away, that it was good, for I know if they had recovered her by violent remedies (if even then it had been possible) she would have suffered so sadly afterwards, and it tried her so fearfully to be weak and in pain. I would so much rather she were gone away than here in suffering. It would be just the contrary if one were not so assured of the all-satisfyingness of His Presence. She is so safe and warm and gladly waiting near Him.

[*Note to page 64.* The following extract from the Diary of John Cennick, the saintly and much persecuted Moravian preacher and hymn-writer, refers to an ancestor (great-grandfather ?) of Mary's father :—" March 21st, 1744. Br. Clifford, Brinkworth, departed. He was awakened the first time I preached there ; shared in the outrages at Stratton [1741] ; his head was cut in three places and his body bruised in trying to keep the blows from me ; was the chief person in building Brinkworth Meeting-house ; a sincere friend to the children of God."]

CHAPTER III

YEARS OF PREPARATION

There is no man among us
So proud in his mind,
Nor so good in his gifts,
Nor so gay in his youth,
Nor so daring in deeds
Nor so dear to his Lord,
That his soul never stirred
At the thought of sea-faring,
Or what his great Master
Will do with him yet . . .
He lives ever longing
Who looks to the sea.

*"The Seafarer" (translated from Anglo-Saxon
by Henry Morley).*

MARY'S life was a strong and steady growth from childhood onwards, and it was no special training but rather the way in which she took hold of her opportunities during the first forty years of her life that prepared her for the larger fields of work that lay ahead.

Her mind was never idle. Modern education was unknown when she was young, but she read and studied diligently. Almost as soon as she left school she gathered together the teachers of the

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St. Matthew's schools and a few other young friends and led a class for the study of history. English history and Church history, as well as European and even Egyptian and Assyrian history, were ventured into. But the subjects chosen are of less importance than the method by which she made them her own, her sympathetic study of character and her large grasp of human problems, comparing them, and applying them to contemporary situations. She kept a little note-book in which she wrote down criticisms of the books she read—Thackeray, Kingsley, Carlyle, George Eliot, various biographies and other works. Her long hours of household mending were not wasted: they gave her time to assimilate and form a judgment on what she read. In an essay she wrote in 1869 there occurs this paragraph:—

“Ruskin speaks of the mowing machine as a great evil because it deprives the worker of all enjoyment in his work; an inference which comes home to one even more strongly in the case of the sewing machine. All the sense of repose, time for reflection and honest pride connected with a morning's needlework vanish with the hurry, the absorbed inspection and inartistic result of Wheeler & Wilson's Patent.”

This essay was one on the origins of ancient myths written for Mr. John Addington Symonds, who was giving courses of lectures to the Ladies' Association in Clifton. The Association, one of the early ventures towards opening the way to higher education for women, was formed by Miss Catherine Winkworth,

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aided by Dr. Percival, then Headmaster of Clifton College, and Mr. Symonds. The emphatic and repeated "Good," "Good and original," written in the margin of Mary's essay by Mr. Symonds shows his estimation of her intellectual work.

In 1872 the Ladies' Association arranged a course of lectures by Mr. Mandell Creighton (afterwards Bishop of London) on the Renaissance in Italy. Mr. Creighton's comment on Mary's papers is, "Full of good remarks, which is what I principally notice in your work : the delicate and subtle insight helped by sympathy which enable you to go below the surface."

Mary seemed to go below the surface without any effort, and took a long view in reading the signs of history, and in later years this power was ever at the service of her judgment in her dealings with men and women, and with the social problems of her day.

Here are one or two passages from an essay on Savonarola as a Reformer :—

"It seems to be the peculiar curse of false teaching that it hurts the second generation more than the first who listen to it."

"There is some danger of our underrating work which was done for one generation, and looking only at the effect it has had indirectly on the development of the world's growth. But one generation is really as valuable as another ; no doubt as much thought and care and tenderness has been spent on the people who lived long ago as on us who are in the foreground of our picture. They did not go through their lives for our sakes, life was worth living for themselves,

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and they were worth the utmost that could be done for them and given to them. We only see the course of the long winding river where its surface catches the light, and we are far too much inclined to think of it as a mere path for the barges and boats that come floating down with stores to us to Camelot, where we live. But there are other villages and towns far up the stream, and there is a whole world of life and interest all along the banks and in the river, and our own little bit is neither the greatest nor the most beautiful, nor that for which alone the river was made."

"Are there not," Mr. Creighton asks in the margin, "many who live in the future even more than in the present, and foresee a city glorious far beyond our Camelot?"

Mary was coming gradually to her vision of that "glorious city." She had for her own possession an ideal of beauty and holiness, and as she climbed the steep streets and lanes of Bristol, entering homes of every degree of poverty and visiting the institutions and hospitals which were the refuge of the distressed, she had two lamps to guide her steps and lead her forward. One was the light of mental truthfulness which faced facts, which never turned aside or refused to see the pain and ugliness that existed, or the moral evils that had led to them. The other was the true reformer's gift of seeing what might be done to alter things and make them better; and with Mary, to see the need and the possibility of action was inseparable from action itself



1869.

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She was never obliged to earn money, although in her home there had always been need for careful economy. She herself so effectually shouldered the money burdens of the household that through sheer ignorance the rest of the family gave her but moderate sympathy when she announced with thankfulness a balance at the end of each year. Although she was by nature inclined to be apprehensive, she obeyed quite simply and faithfully the precept, "Be not anxious . . . for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." And again and again through her life a legacy or a gift came just at the right moment to supply a need. She was always free, therefore, to live and work for others.

Her work in these years was almost entirely personal, caring for individuals one by one: "not moulding their lives but helping their souls"—so she admonished herself in her "Old Maid Book." For example, there is this incident in a letter of 1881:—

I have undertaken to look after a young woman who, in delirium tremens, jumped into the river a fortnight since. She has three nice little children and a husband at sea and is trying hard to be good. We put her with great difficulty into a nice room in Woolcot Park, and to-night the husband of the landlady comes up to say she must go—isn't the "class of person" they like. Poor soul. I never felt so ashamed of belonging to anyone as I did when in the Police Court on Saturday. But she is so improved, tidy clothes and hopeful bright face—such

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an acquiescing nature—it *seems* as if anything, good or bad, might be made of her.

But besides personal influence, Mary had the gift of organising. There were at St. Matthew's the usual parish organisations, Coal Club, Penny Bank, Reading and Coffee Room, and later, Boys' and Girls' Clubs; but there was also one which Mary used to look back upon with some pride, as having been a pioneer of the modern methods of organising charitable work to prevent overlapping and inequalities of treatment. This was a Committee on which met representatives of the different religious bodies in that part of Bristol. She refers to it in a letter to Mrs. A. Browne (undated) as follows:—

I will put in a paper about our new thought for taking care of our poor people. You see, it was bad for them to be looking for help in too many directions and for no one to know what was really being done for them. So by this means we take knowledge of each other's doings and hope to help the poor more effectually. The first Committee was held this morning and went off most pleasantly. We represent four congregations—St. Matthew's, Highbury Chapel, Portland do., and Arley do., and we have the Relieving Officer and our Bible Woman to help.

Nevertheless there were not wanting signs that Mary was not satisfied with these opportunities. She was restless, feeling within her the power to do more, yet curbing her ambition lest it should prove only the discontent of egotism. As was natural, the evidence of this is chiefly in the early years before

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she was thirty. Her habits of self-discipline and her devotion to the work that lay nearest seem later to have silenced impatience: and indeed her life was busy enough and useful enough to satisfy any ordinary mind.

To Mrs. A. Browne.

Sept. 12th, 1867.

Don't you find your deficiencies most when you are at home? I do. Everything seems to say "No" to me sometimes, and just now I am so dissatisfied with myself. All kinds of things come crowding upon my mind while I write, and I know talking about them would do more harm than good, and that the true work set before me is to do what our Father sends each moment and to try and be near Him. A restlessness comes over me, making me ask and ask again, What am I doing? Is my life worthily occupied? Do I do as great things as I ought? And, Ellen, I feel sure this is a temptation and not the right feeling, because I don't do nearly all I might as it is. I am awfully self-indulgent and not at all worthy for more than I have. I do pray to be content with "Faithful in the least."

You see, my life is so very smooth and happy and propitious and we have been trained in such good habits that the right path is outwardly easy, and I don't feel the constant pricking and pain which forces so many to feel the need of our Saviour. I do love Him with all my soul, from the bottom of my heart, and yet I forget Him constantly and behave shamefully. If I thought my desire for more service was purely from love to Him it would be different, but I am sure it is personal restlessness

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and a sort of self-satisfying desire. And there is this plain comfort, that nothing appears in the main my duty which is not easily within my reach.

All these "I's" and "Me's" will not bother you, Ellen dear, I hope.

"Don't you pine for something to grind yourself on?" Mary wrote in 1870 to one whom she addresses as "Beloved friend of my early middle age" (Mary being twenty-eight at the time.)

To the same friend she wrote when staying in a wealthy neighbourhood:—

This place somehow depresses me. There seem a countless number of nice luxurious middle-class houses, each built leisurely in its own garden and furnished with perfect comfort; the people estimable and affluent but too easy. All the want and sorrow of the city are out of sight and reach, and they only work to relieve it by deputy or in ways diluted to mildness. The thought of living in such a place oppresses me, because it really might happen, and I fear I should instantly go off into a dreamless sleep and wake when the night had come and I could not work.

In another letter—after a humorous description of the crowded home in Highbury Place, where the six brothers and sisters with their father and mother pursued their several avocations and received their visitors, rich and poor, in a house consisting of "three sitting-rooms, five bedrooms, one kitchen and a pantry"—Mary says, "For my part I like to live in an inconvenient house in a poor situation; one can

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look with a better face on the dear poor people who come in all their distresses and want to the door. You know we have shops and houses built close up to us now."

Mary's way was becoming plain before her. Earlier in life she had thought of devoting herself to writing or music ; and vaguely she seems to have considered the possibility of other changes. But the service of the poor claimed her, and she responded generously and with all her heart and mind.

* * * * *

There is another side to these years of preparation, the spiritual side. It is sacred ground ; but the flowers and fruit which grew there made Mary's life like a watered garden in the sight of all, and a few of her letters reveal some of the hidden springs whence came her strength.

One event which, in Mary's words, brought a "blessed flood of spiritual life" was the first religious Conference at Broadlands. It was through Edward Clifford that the invitation came. He had been lifted out of the struggling life of a young unknown artist by the kindness and friendship of Mr. and Mrs. Cowper-Temple, who had discovered and bought one of his carefully-painted symbolic pictures, and had introduced him to their friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Cowper-Temple (afterwards Lord and Lady Mount Temple) arranged this Conference at their beautiful home near Romsey, in order to give an opportunity for making known the teaching of Mr. and Mrs. Pearsall Smith, who were Quakers

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from Philadelphia. They asked Edward to come and bring his friends. He brought his three sisters, Mary, Margaret, and Claire, his brother Alfred, and his friends Dr. and Mrs. Cholmeley, and Miss Anna Letitia Waring.

New and lasting friendships began for Mary at Broadlands. Besides Lady Mount Temple and Mrs. Pearsall Smith, she met there for the first time Mrs. A. H. Sumner, and though she and Mary were generally separated from each other by distance, and later by illness, this friendship was one of the deepest and warmest of Mary's life.

It is not easy at this distance of time to catch an echo of Broadlands and transmit it to a later generation. The Conference met in July, 1874, and was the first of many. Revered and well-loved names are found in the records of the Conferences : Andrew Jukes, prophet and mystic, Mrs. Russell Gurney, George Macdonald, Theodor Monod, George Howard Wilkinson, Arthur Stanton, and George Body, Amanda Smith the negress, Basil Wilberforce, Alfred Gurney, and many others.

To the stately house with its Grecian portico and green lawns sloping down to the river the guests came from their toil in grimy cities, from social and philanthropic work, or from intellectual or artistic studies. "At Broadlands no distinctions of class were felt : working people were as welcome as peers and peeresses." They came into an atmosphere of fellowship and spiritual light, sometimes out of the narrow ways of religious controversy or the dim regions of semi-belief. They came into the midst

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of beauty—beauty of nature and of art, beauty of thought and of speech. And into their hearts and minds shone the truths that life in Christ is a life of liberty and of victory, that there is a union of souls in God which no bodily separation or outward differences can destroy. It was natural there for friends to speak to one another “in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts unto the Lord.”

The meetings for converse and prayer were in the Orangery, or out of doors under the great beech trees. Those who wished could begin the days with early Communion in Romsey Abbey, and there Mary and her friends usually met.

“It is really wonderfully like heaven,” Mary wrote when she was at Broadlands; “the lovely peaceful place, shady lawn with vistas of sunshine, beautiful trees growing exquisitely, the flowing river, and groups of happy people here and there. We had an early gathering this morning—7.30—it was as usual under the beech trees. The wind is something very wonderful among the leaves and on our faces.”

“The sense of a Divine Presence was wonderfully felt, and probably it was a crisis in the life of nearly everyone present. Hannah Smith and Andrew Jukes were certainly the most memorable of the speakers. Her brilliance and felicity of expression were captivating, and her talk was so clear and practical as to be almost irresistible. When she spoke her face gained a soft Madonna-like beauty, and her tones were of an urgent but restrained sweetness.

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The listeners felt that they were entering into a new and undreamed-of happiness, and there was really a heavenly love and comradeship manifested by all who were there. . . .

“The joyful discovery continually recurring that someone had passed into new and bright experiences, and the delight of learning that persons from whom we had been separated by wretched party feeling were beautiful souls able to bring fresh life to us, as we, perhaps, to them—these happy exercises lifted us into a region that was more than earthly.”¹

This Conference was a landmark in Mary's life. It was her meeting with the Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains: “*Then said the Shepherds one to another, Let us here show to the Pilgrims the Gates of the Celestial City, if they have skill to look through our Perspective Glass. The Pilgrims then lovingly accepted the motion: So they had them to the top of an high hill, called Clear, and gave them the Glass to look.*”

Reading Mary's letters and diary one thinks she must often have been on that high hill called Clear. Her look was directed to what was above and beyond. Especially one notices this in the passages in her letters about prayer. As in the following letter, we see how she valued worship—prayer that is God-centred, in distinction to petitions that are self- or world-centred. Yet in spite of this, or because of it, her heart was always full of intercession,

¹ From *A Green Pasture*, by Edward Clifford, published by the Church Army.

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mingling the names of friends beyond the veil with every kind of need in this world.

To Alfred Clifford.

Concerning what you say of worship I have been reflecting. I don't think it has been lost sight of in the Church Service. The Te Deum, the hymns in the Communion Service, the Psalms themselves, and parts of the Collects are the very thing. Only the act of worship seems to require time, and certainly I have often wished for a few pauses in the Church Service, only I fear they would be abused. I do feel that *we* have lost sight of the Act of Worship and that it is one of those things which can only be individually revived and for the time being—it is so entirely unmechanical that you cannot make future provision, and one would not even wish it to be other than a free-will offering.

On the mystery of Redemption.

KINGSDOWN,

Good Friday.

I don't remember a Good Friday before when I have been quite alone all day. It is very solemn and one gets into the mystery a little more, or perhaps only as far as feeling what a mystery there is. It seems to me that no one can really *explain* what "bearing our sins in His own body" means. One can see the substitution and expiation and atonement all a little, but the greatest mystery lies underneath all; we don't seem to know what the great evil of sin has done. When people talk about it being easy for God just to forgive sin, as we do to each other,

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they don't recognise that it has to be cleansed and purged away, not only forgiven.

A very few years later Mary, in her daily work, was facing as never before the mysteries of sin and pain. It seems from her little diary that they began to be overwhelming, and she wrote down the following thoughts to strengthen and stay her mind. They are the same that she afterwards expanded in her little book *The Pain of the World: How to face it*. They were her anchor which always held.

Jan. 30th, 1884.

"And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only." St. Matt. xvii. 7, 8.

Their minds were bowed down with fear—the terribleness of the Divine in the midst of this confused world, evil and pain prevailing. Jesus touched them—the beloved Son come to unite us practically with God. His words are quite simple, and, thank God, are just a command. "*Arise*," leave off fearing and speculating and *Do*. "*Be not afraid*," put away this paralysing fear. Christ is the only one human soul who knows. He came to reveal the Father, to open the way to God by the sacrifice of Himself and to assure our hearts of the blessed unseen universe.

Let us see how He came into the evil of this world the mystery which I cannot see that He explained or tried to explain.

He suffered deeply because of it. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The trouble of the world was great anguish to Him.

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He showed in signs that He was come to conquer it, and yet He left most of it untouched.

He formed a little flock who were to witness for Him and to go forth always winning a way for the light.

Though pain distressed Him it is the lesser evil, an indirect consequence of sin. He fights with sin rather than with pain.

He always recognises the fact of pain coming to the more innocent as well as to the guilty.

The great work of the Church is to minister to these.

All His teaching looks forward to deliverance.

The following passages are from letters to her brother in India, who had written to her in the depression of failure. She answered by telling of her own struggles against discouragement.

REDLAND GREEN,
Sept. 1st and 15th, 1881.

You will know how I have been with you since getting your letter on Monday. I am going to send you some notes of a Bible Class of Mr. Wilkinson's which helped me the other day.

I have been so down for some time, feeling I was failing everywhere and doing such stupid things. Just now I am rather comforted and taking hold better. Two of your MS. sermons (one on Numbers vi. 24, etc., and the other on "Seek ye my face; Thy face, Lord, will I seek") were such a comfort to me while we were away. It has seemed sometimes as if one had come to the very end of being able to

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think or do anything. . . . It seems to me I am scarcely ever in the state when Christ's power *can* have its own way in me. I am so full of the habits of self-reliance and receiving honour from men. Sometimes one would give anything just to see Him and get rid of our old self. Well, He is bringing us to this. . . .

If it were not for the amount of sympathy and being over-believed-in by good people here, one would be shocked often to see how little result there is to *see*. I think it is healthier to face this. Sometimes there is so much to encourage, and sometimes blow after blow comes and one ought to feel quite emptied and low down. And then comes some unlooked-for token of good. To me it seems that when once I am living simply to God, that life of liberty, He may be able to do such great things. It is such comfort to fall back on our Lord and His life. As to my work, it seems as if one could do almost *nothing*. One feels so powerless to win people to what one wants them to be. . . .

Take in all the sunshine you can—don't refuse it in everyday matters. I feel as if one ought to enter into that in God which makes those exquisitely happy and gay Swiss hayfields, and which gave Ted and Constance and G. H. S. their natural dispositions. *The Restitution*¹ which I read at Arzier gives one a blessed hold of the grand leisureliness of God, and His most-blessed-of-all Fatherliness.

In the address referred to by Mary at the beginning of her letter, Mr. Wilkinson (afterwards Bishop of

¹ *The Restitution of all Things*, by the Rev. Andrew Jukes.

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Truro and Primus of Scotland) expresses a principle which we find her again and again seeking to make her own—the determination that self shall be nought and that God shall be all in all. It was the protective weapon in her spiritual armoury which taught her to be indifferent to her own failure or success. In the notes copied out by her the saintly teacher from whom she had learnt so much said : “ The proud or the humble life is before us. Only if we choose the humble life we must be prepared to find it a reality. It involves a continual state of risk and uncertainty. ‘ I can of my own self do nothing.’ We must be prepared for utter failure. . . . He that would live the humble life must make up his mind that he can only live as he *receives power* from God.”

Mary’s life appeared full of calm success. On all hands she met with approbation, not to say adulation. How came she then to be aware of the discipline and humiliation of failure? The answer can only be that she measured her achievements by her aim.

Who aimeth at the sky
Shoots higher much than he who means a tree,

though he may think that his arrows never reach their mark. She aimed at the height of humility and found “ a grain of glory mixed with humbleness.”

CHAPTER IV

MEMORIES OF MARY CLIFFORD

Let thy mind's sweetness have his operation
Upon thy body, clothes, and habitation.

GEORGE HERBERT.

RAINBOWS are constantly appearing in Mary's letters ; so also are field flowers and clouds and all that such a lover of beauty would notice. She goes for a country walk near Bristol and finds "a joyful surprise of daisies and larks, and bees on white candytuft" ; or in the garden of her friend Constance Cholmeley, "crowds of daisies in the grass growing under the bushes—more like Claire's pictures than any garden I know." Again, in Switzerland, "The glory of to-day turned out to be the rainbows. Think of this ; intensely brilliant left side of bow, double ; then dark grey, and an outer bow ; and in this dark grey band loomed the Wetterhorn. Inside the bow, all pale and wet, streaming with white streams, the Eiger. Other bows came and went, but that was the brightest I ever saw."

Then there are glimpses of happy home life, with a ripple of laughter running through all ; and she makes no secret of the golden key which lies at the

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foot of her own life's rainbow. But there is not space in this book to quote her chatty letters in full; a few of her thoughts in them must suffice, and one wishes they could be read in her own beautiful flowing irregular hand-writing, carefully formed and pleasant to read, with every now and then a sudden large and generous curve, typical of the originality and freedom and decision of her mind.

To Mrs. A. Browne. (An early letter.)

KINGSDOWN,

Wednesday evening, September 17th.

Now I am going to have a good talk with you and not feel in a hurry. It is, you see, Wednesday night, and we have come home from church and had supper, and now papa and Claire are reading, and I am sitting in one chair and putting my feet snugly into another. We have a little fire but the curtains are not drawn, and the wind comes looking in at the windows, and it has been raining a fine moist rain nearly all day. We had the Holy Communion after the sermon to-night. Only a few people were at church owing to the weather; however, it was *very* nice, and I thought of you as I always do. I like to gather my dearest people together into sight then and try to realise what our part in the Communion of Saints is. . . .

Thank you for the £2 for Mrs. Mortimore. It will pay up to the end of this year. I saw the old lady this morning, and she took out for my admiration a wonderful shawl which she had just bought for 5s. at a pawnbroker's. "You see, Miss, I can wear

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it right side or wrong." And so she could, only the wrong side would look remarkably wrong.

To the same, in answer to a question about "behaviour to worldly people."

It seems to me that one cannot be too loving and sympathising to other people about all that is not wrong, that coldness and censoriousness in a Christian are utterly hateful to God. Think of a sweet, tender, sunny day in April—God's work so very fresh from His hand—how entirely loving and sympathising such a day makes one feel He is. . . .

One sees how our Lord healed the people, supplied all their wants with tender, compassionate thoughtfulness, and seemed to expect thus to win them to see what manner of man He was.

Of this entering into the lives and interests of others she says in the same letter: "I think it is the secret of rightly charming—the Christian charm."

Among the friendships begun in these years was one with Mrs. John Addington Symonds. It was touched with the colours of romance for Mary, and her pleasure in it shines through her letters and diary. Like all that was most precious in her life, this gift was laid by her in the place where no evil could touch it.

"My friendship and love for Mrs. Symonds," she wrote one New Year's Eve (1871) in her "Old Maid Book," "I gave it to God and He has given it to me; and it has been a source of great joy and refreshment. I want to keep it in His hands, and pray for her and myself increasingly, and always

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that He will manifest Himself to her. She is an exquisite person, sincere and full of grace."

Mrs. Symonds's daughter, Mrs. W. W. Vaughan, has written the following memories of Mary in the days when she used to visit Clifton Hill House ; and her account, which she has generously allowed to be printed here, gives a picture of Mary as she appeared outside her own home.

"I have been trying to put together my memories of my mother's old friend, and of my own and my children's friend, Mary Clifford. But I find it terribly hard to do so in any given space, for when I come to write about her I find that she pervades my life and memory in a way that perhaps no one, save my most dear and near ones, ever has done. Also nothing that I can write will, in the very least, convey to other people that sense of a ' blessing ' which her living presence always gave me, and which her memory still can bring me in all the pleasures, certainly in all the perplexities and worries, of daily life.

"This sense of her power of giving forth a blessing was, I believe, the result of her own continual inward prayer—her own walking with a personal God Whom she felt to be very near to her, and Who was, therefore, the whole guiding power of her every-day life. It has been my happy fortune to live with various noble-hearted men and women, but not one of these enters quite within the same circle of spiritual light as does the figure of Mary Clifford. In these material days one feels a shrinking from any description

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of one's own more mediæval vision ; but I am glad, firmly and humbly, to state here that Mary has seemed to me, in her own earthly walk, more near to the figure of Christ than any other person, except one or two rare children and one quite young girl that I have known. She was, with all her goodness, very reasonable ; she had a large, clear intellect and an excellent judgment like that of some good man, and this made her spiritual force so much more, rather than less, real and telling—so much more essentially like the Man character of our Lord.

“But I will come to my memories. I cannot actually describe any ‘first memory’ of her because she was a veritable part of my life in childhood and, notably, of my infant years.

“My own young father and mother were living then in my grandfather's house at Clifton. It was a big stone house, built rather after the Italian style, with a beautiful flight of steps leading down from the drawing-room floor to the long terrace of the big garden, and commanding wide views over the city of Bristol with its wharfs, ships, and church spires. Down in that great seething city which we small children never entered, but where we could hear the church bells ringing, Mary's work of mercy was being done—a work of a perfectly hidden nature, and little known to the watering-place society of the more ‘fashionable’ Clifton.

“Clifton Hill House during my mother's short reign became, in spite of my father's increasing ill-health, a sort of gathering ground for all sorts of distinguished persons of very different aims and interests to discuss

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their views in. Amongst these Mary Clifford emerges to my vision as by far the most attractive and compelling figure.

“Mary was the good angel of our house. There were other angels, it is true; there were the three Miss Winkworths, and the beloved Fanny Alleyne—poetess and philosopher; there was my aunt, Mrs. T. H. Green, and various others; but none, in the eyes of the children of the house, could really compare with Mary. (I must call her ‘Mary’ here, for from the moment that we could pronounce a name she was always ‘Mary’ to us). She used to come sailing up the dusty roads from Bristol when her day’s work was ended. Sometimes she stayed to dinner. Her work was among the outcast and the poor; but she herself, though always very simply dressed, seemed somehow of an almost dazzling radiance. She did ‘good works,’ but she did them in beautiful raiment. She never looked fussed or ‘drab’ or ‘philanthropic.’ When she came amongst us (we were three small girls all much of an age), she did not merely kiss us and pass on as other grown-up people did; she opened her arms and she gathered us into them. She always wore a long loose cloak of some beautiful colour, and under that wonderful cloak of hers, like a mediæval Madonna, she could easily shelter little children. I remember so well how we used to make a rush for her—up from the garden, or down from our nursery, when we saw her coming. I remember her loving welcome. It was a sort of comfortable ‘home-coming’ feeling.

“As far as I am able to remember, Mary nearly

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always came to see us in our house, we rarely went to see her in her own. But there were one or two occasions when we were taken, either by our nurse or mother, to visit the home of the Cliffords in Kingsdown. My memory of the actual house is hazy. Those were the days of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, and Edward was of course in the thick of it. I know there was an atmosphere of peacocks' feathers and of very good blue china, also of lovely old Chippendale chairs, and I believe (but I cannot be certain of this) that there were hollyhocks in the garden. The object, however, which remained clearly branded on my brain was the portrait of a large tiger prowling in a jungle, with most marked stripes upon his back. This portrait became to my childish mind the more amazing when I was informed that no one less than Mary's own father had painted it! There were sandal-wood boxes and beads, too, I think, from India; and there were many portraits of beautiful ladies and young men and saints by Edward Clifford, who was then in the beginning of his fame as the portrait painter of the then fashionable Pre-Raphaelite set. (I may mention in passing that Edward Clifford was one of our very great friends: he was more—he was a comrade to us children, and he must have been boundlessly good and enduring towards our demands, for I remember how he would stay in a hymn to sing us a certain most melancholy and, I think, deeply sentimental song about a nightingale, which had for us an unholy fascination. I remember how it began: 'Listen to the nightingale,' and how this was

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constantly repeated in the various verses, but I know no more, and have certainly never heard it since. Edward Clifford spent a good deal of his holiday time in his old Bristol home, and there he made a lovely drawing of my sister Janet, which always hangs in my own room. He wanted to make one of me, but I was a restless and impatient sitter and preferred the alternative—most rashly suggested by himself—of picking raspberries in their back garden.)

“There were exquisite real china cups and saucers in Mary’s home such as children never drink their milk from in any nursery. We drank our milk from these lovely cups because the Cliffords understood the love of beauty and of luxury which is harmlessly latent in little children.

“I have mentioned Mary’s cloak, but all her clothes were perfect ; and if ever there were clothes which expressed their wearer’s character they were those of Mary Clifford. How beautiful, how fitting they were. But few of us, alas ! are worthy to wear such clothes as hers. Great ladies wore them long ago ; beautiful ladies on old Italian tombs wore something very like them. They suggested long flowing lines, and services in beautiful cathedrals ; but they were never too long for all her walking through the meanest and most sordid alleys of our great towns. I think that many, many weary and neglected women must have blessed the *hope* she gave them as she passed. I think that the worst worldlings must sometimes have cast their eyes down as she met them. She liked beautiful soft stuffs

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and colours. She could get lengths of a curious camel's hair cloth from India which took a perfect purple dye or some soft myrtle green. Her gowns were often old and threadbare (I think she told me she expected them to stand her hard wear always for three years at least), but they were always faultlessly kept,—exquisite would, I think, be the adjective,—and finished at the throat and wrists by some oddment of spotless lace. We all of us remember that little grey stone locket at her neck, and the long silver chatelaine¹ for her pencil and her glasses. Her hair turned white, I think, when she was barely twenty-five, I never remember her without almost snow-white hair; and always, in later life, when she had taken off her beautiful Quaker bonnet she would put on the Indian muslin cap edged with some perfect lace, for wearing indoors. I remember how impressed I was when I one day realised the manner in which this little cap was stowed away for an afternoon or evening party: it was put into a very small round tin—a mustard tin, I think—and this went easily into her bag or pocket. Oh! what a lesson for the garish adornment of women of fashion! For such was the effect of this swift toilet that whatever room Mary entered she was certain to stand forth amongst its inhabitants supreme in personal distinction and in loveliness.

"Ours was in nearly every way a very happy childhood, with only one break and exception of most

¹ Her niece tells me that this chatelaine was really a steel dog-chain—another proof of the wearer's personal dignity, for one felt it was of the most chaste silver.

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poignant period of pain. We lived with good and remarkable people older than ourselves, and we three sisters supplied the needs of young companionship to one another. We lived, too, amidst beautiful natural surroundings, at first in our big garden at Clifton, and later, in the Alps, where the ill-health of my father forced our family eventually to make their home, and where our lives expanded amidst the snows and meadows of a true Alpine world. The thing was well enough, but friends and relations could not agree to it, and urged our parents to send us away to school. They hesitated, but at last submitted to a plan as odious, probably, to them as to ourselves, and to a school in Geneva we were accordingly sent. The school bore a very good name, but it was infested with a worldly element which my high-minded parents certainly never suspected. We were extremely unhappy there, and I remember only one or two pleasures of that period, and these became a sort of anguish by contrast. One of these pleasures was a visit from Mary Clifford. She arrived in a fly one spring afternoon and carried us off immediately to a wood where primroses were growing and whence we could see, above a low copse, the summit of Mont Blanc. Who but Mary Clifford would have discovered such a primrose copse so near to the hated Geneva? It must be well over forty years ago, but how distinctly I can see her still, sitting there in the spring sunshine in her dear brown cashmere gown, her big brown cloak and Quaker bonnet, so warm and homely amongst the Geneva primroses. The city and its ugly streets, the class-

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rooms of our prison-house, seemed, for the instant, thousands of miles away. I have a feeling that our removal from school life (and the experiment, which only lasted two terms, was never again repeated) is connected with that visit of our best friend, for I fancy she could read the hearts of the lonely little girls.

“I have only one other foreign memory of her. It belongs to a much later period, but I like to give it here. It is of a hot summer night on the platform at Laon. My husband and I were going, I think, to Switzerland, and a party of the Cliffords were returning thence to England. Mary was the last person I should ever have expected to meet, and great was my amazement to behold this gracious and beloved figure moving through the bustling crowd of August tourists, so entirely distinguished from them, yet so friendly and serene in the old green cloak, and with the radiant welcoming smile. Her train left the station before our own. A star was shining above the towers of the cathedral. I caught my last glimpse of her leaning back by a window, ready for her night journey—serene and holy amidst a welter of incongruous luggage and dusty fellow-travellers—gathering as it were about her all the cool of the coming night into a place where certainly few but herself would have dared to expect it. . . .”

It was generally agreed that Mary became more beautiful in middle life than she had been in her youth: as her father remarked in a letter about

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her, "The older she gets the beautifuller she looks." The attention which may at first have been arrested by her white hair, brilliant complexion, and simple, beautiful clothes, soon became more deeply satisfied by the sense of perfect unconscious harmony which her presence seemed to give forth, like music, quieting what was evil and calling forth a desire for good in those who saw her. But as no one probably ever saw her for the first time—nor perhaps for the hundredth time—without delighting in the beauty and fitness of her clothes, it may be well here to give her own thoughts on the subject in her own words. The passages given are from "A Bible Reading with a Class of Young Women," printed in a magazine called *The Harbinger of Dawn*, April, 1876. This was about the date when she began to wear her characteristic bonnet and cloak. The style of her cap was invented by her brother Edward, and the rich colours of her dresses and cloaks—green or blue or violet—were as much his choice as her own.

Lesson on St. Matthew vi. 25, 28, 30.

Our Lord speaks to us Christians, His disciples, that is His learners, and He says, "Be not anxious, what ye shall put on." "Be not anxious" is a truer translation of our Lord's words than "Take no thought." To take no thought about our clothing is not possible when we are obliged to make, and mend, and plan beforehand; but not to be anxious is quite possible, for it is His command. . . . It is better even to make mistakes over our dress than to think overmuch about it. God sees that as a

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grave fault when an earthly friend might think everything was quite right. A dear little servant, who dresses so nicely and quietly that you would think of her as a model, was so full of her last new bonnet that she could not resist telling even the baker's man that it was to be trimmed with a grey quilling ; and another, who never wore anything gay, said that dress was her chief snare. . . .

But see next, it says, " If God so clothe the grass of the field." *How* has He done it ? It seems as if that lily was Christ's idea of what is beautiful in clothing ; and so I think we shall find that there is wisdom for us in considering the wild flowers.

Think of your favourite flowers. . . . The first thing that strikes me is that they are always exactly fit for where they have to be and what they have to do. Stone-crop, growing on walls and rocky ledges, is short and thick and dry, ready for wet and wind ; a neat, well-tucked-up little body, with nothing trailing loose about it. A water-lily in its pool is perfect beauty ; lift it out, and its colour seems to change, and the smooth rounded leaves droop flabbily at once. Down there it was the queen of flowers, in your hand it is a helpless failure.

Somebody thought of cowslips, and someone else of daffodils. Did you ever notice how they hold the light ? In a sloping field, as you look up at them, with rather a low sun beyond, daffodils are like pale lamps, and cowslips like fantastic little flames. If they grew flat on the ground or up in hedges, or if they had a curtain of leaves round them, this beauty, peculiar to them, could not be. Yet lilies of the valley would hardly be pretty at all but for their leaves ; and vetches, except in a hedge, would be straggling and helpless.

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The next thing I notice in wild flowers is that there is purpose in all the beauty which we find out as we get wiser. . . .

The third quality you must think about is their colour. It is less strong than the colour of garden flowers ; but there is more lovely harmony in it. Compare a scarlet poppy with a scarlet geranium, or a bit of crow's-foot with a calceolaria, and then see how far more beautiful the wild flowers look in a landscape. We should be sorry to exchange a field of grass ready to be mown, with its tall daisies and clover and buttercups, for a field of grass mixed up with even anything so beautiful in themselves as carnations. There is, you see, no great number of colours in each flower, but exquisite tones and harmonies. I often try to keep a flower in mind when I am planning a new hat or dress.

Almost the last thing I want you to notice is the freshness and exquisite cleanness with which they come right up out of the brown earth—not a speck ; and yet, if you try to get out a root, your hands are dirty in a moment.

Now I am going to carry away four delightful thoughts, which are henceforth to help me to understand how God clothes the flowers, and how He treats the matter of clothing.

Fitness.—My clothes shall be exactly suitable for the kind of place I am in, and the kind of work I have to do.

Purpose.—Nothing shall be for mere show ; there shall be real use and no waste.

The colours shall be in harmony, and not many of them.

Freshness and pureness shall be kept, even when the clothes are getting rather old, for **I will choose**

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materials that don't mind rain or wind, if I have to be out in them ; and that will wash, and look as fresh as a daisy when they come home.

Whatsoever we do, whether we eat or drink, *or dress*, let us do all to the glory of God.

But above all, remember, " Be not anxious."

M. C.

Mary's life at Kingsdown ended in 1879. Her father had been a well-known preacher in Bristol. At one time such crowds came to hear his Advent sermons on the prophecies of the Bible that people were sitting even on the steps of the pulpit. It was his belief that when a man, through age or ill-health, became unfit for his work he ought to retire ; but as people seldom realise when that moment has come to themselves he laid it on his children to tell him of it. When therefore they observed that his preaching was losing its old fire and vigour and that increasing ill-health prevented his fulfilling the duties of his parish, they decided that the time had come, and Edward gently told his father so. Mr. Clifford sent in his resignation the next day. The family then moved from Kingsdown to a house in Redland, a little farther from the city of Bristol.

It was a neighbourhood of old and dignified houses, some half-dozen of them within their large gardens between Mary's new home and Durdham Down. Tall elms and drooping ilexes overhung the road that led up to the Downs, and just over the way lay Redland Green, a half-wild bit of common land with a row of splendid chestnuts along the near side.



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On the Green stood Redland Green Chapel (chapel-of-ease of the Parish Church of Westbury-on-Trym), with its small classical dome set in the midst of greenery, and yew hedges bordering the flagged path within its tall iron gates.

The other side of Redland Green dipped down into a shady dell with welling springs of water, a spot much loved by Mary Clifford. Beyond were the undulating Redland fields, making near green horizons against the sky, a paradise of sloping meadows and hawthorn hedges, moon daisies and buttercups, green grass and larks.¹

About the time that Mr. Clifford's family left Kingsdown an old relation, Mrs. Lunell, died, and they inherited from her a quantity of interesting old furniture, china and pictures, all of which came just at the right moment to beautify their new home.

In this same year Margaret went away to India. Alfred Clifford had come home on furlough, and he took Margaret back with him. This, in addition to

¹ Twenty years later (1899) Mary's little diary laments "the trying changes in the Redland neighbourhood." The chief of them were the cutting down of trees, the destruction of beautiful old and historic houses, and the building of hundreds of new ones, and the bringing of the electric trams up the quiet road. Mary made great efforts for the preservation of the natural beauties surrounding her home, but with small success. Even Redland Green, green though it still remains, has scarcely anything of its old semi-wild character, being now cut up by straight asphalt paths. The pretty round sweep of the white road through the grass has gone; and there are plantations of cropped shrubs caged within iron railings where all used to be natural and free.

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parting from the old friends and duties of the beloved St. Matthew's Parish, left a large gap in Mary's life. Many of the old threads were broken off, and the frame was empty for the weaving of a new pattern.

The following is the entry in her "Old Maid Book" at the end of this year :—

Dec. 31st, 1879.—There is hardly a year in our lives in which we have wanted and have had so much help as a family. Alfred's coming, the proposal of Margaret's going, the giving up of St. Matthew's, our move to Redland, and the actual going of Margaret and Alfred.

We could not have believed before how the sting and bitterness would be taken from each of these—not in anticipation but when the need came. Then Mrs. Lunell's property coming exactly when we want it and the excitement connected with the disposal of furniture, etc., all so clearly *sent*.

For myself it has been a year of giving up in many directions. I ask, Lord, that we may as a family grow in grace and in fellowship with Thee and with one another, that even separation and distance may be a means of grace. . . .

May I get the kind of rest that is good for me and walk in the light of Thy countenance for Christ's sake.

CHAPTER V

GUARDIAN OF THE POOR

Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.

Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.—Proverbs xxxi. 8, 9.

MARY CLIFFORD was in her fortieth year when her life's work began.

After 1879, her "year of giving up," when the family moved away from St. Matthew's Parish, she had looked for work in new directions. She then began to visit the old and sick people in the Barton Regis Workhouse Infirmary, and to go there on Sunday evenings to give them Bible reading and singing.

In other parts of England there had been women Guardians since 1875 ; Mary had friends who were in close touch with progressive social reform ; and one so observant and so ready for action as she always was could hardly become familiar with the inside of an old-fashioned Workhouse without being profoundly stirred. Some years later she said in an address :—

"I went upon the Board of Guardians to protect old women who seemed oppressed, and quickly

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found big matters calling for attention, such as the education and training of children, classification to promote purity, nursing of the sick, emigration, legislation on various new matters. . . . It is rather wonderful how beginning to understand a little bit enlarges our view, and brings countless needs into sight.”¹

The suggestion that she should stand for election to the Board of Guardians may have come to her from others, but the chief inspirer and mover in the effort to find women candidates for the Board seems to have been Mary Clifford herself. The newspapers of those days left any “Woman’s Movement” severely alone, and it seems that only one letter remains with any reference to the choice of the vocation which was to fill the next twenty-five years of her life.

To the Rev. Alfred Clifford.

REDLAND GREEN,

Sunday night, Feb. 26th, 1882.

This has been a nice Sunday. Do you know that I can now go to early Communion at St. John’s, 8.15, on Sunday morning, except the first Sunday in the month, when we attend together at Redland Green. The little early time is often delightful. You know that exquisite hymn in the new edition of *Hymns A. & M.*, “I am not worthy,” one of the most beautiful for Holy Communion. I get back in

¹ “The Relation of Women to the State,” Address to the Winchester High School Old Girls’ Society, June, 1894.

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goodish time for breakfast. . . . And it has been a very nice evening at the Hospital, the people in an affectionate, listening, and I think receiving state, more than sometimes.

The Guardians' Election is to be on April 12th. I quite expect to be elected, and another candidate has at last been found for Clifton, Miss Alice Winkworth. Mr. Wilson of Clifton College suggested her to me. I have given up all my leisure nearly to the business of getting this third lady—seen and asked and gone into the subject with quite twelve. Miss Woollam seemed likely to fail, but she is all right now.

Miss Clifford, Miss Alice Winkworth, Miss Catherine Woollam and Mrs. Prentice were elected on April 12th, 1882. They had triumphant majorities. Mary Clifford, standing for the Westbury-on-Trym Ward, received 1,756 votes, which was a majority of 529 over the Guardian next on the list of this ward. She had canvassed industriously herself, and had met with hearty support as well as opposition.

She received the following letter from one of her canvassers after the results of the election were known :—

April 17th, 1882.

MY DEAR MISS CLIFFORD,

So glad to receive a note from you. So pleased to think your happiness was enhanced by anything your humble friends in St. Philip's could do.

I had been wishing for several days for an opportunity to tell you something, not to make you proud,

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but to strengthen you to bear the opposition you may possibly have to bear in your new capacity before you have time to make your influence so far felt, as I am sure you will do, as to soften all opposition into love and respect for you. Well, now for what I want to tell you.

Place : Barton Regis Union. Time : Midday on Wednesday last. Guardians, clerks, and counters all gone upstairs to dinner, and while I was waiting their return an old male pauper watching his opportunity came up to me and said : " If you please, sir, do you think that either of the ladies will get returned ? "

Answer : " Well, it would be difficult at present to venture an opinion with regard to three of them, but as far as Miss Clifford is concerned I think her chance is safe, as she has a majority up to the present of about three hundred."

The old man's face brightened up as he said : " Why, God bless her, sir, that's the very one we wants returned even if we can't get the others ; she's a *reglar* angel, sir ; if you only seen the nice flowers she brings here, sir, ay, and even snuff for the old women, sir."

I turned away from the old man feeling something like moisture on my cheeks, and could not help thinking, Happy Miss Clifford to deserve such testimony, and fortunate paupers to have a Miss Clifford to minister to you.

I saw several things in the counting that deserves notice. . . . Mr. — came to me several times wondering why his name was omitted on the papers of so many Liberal voters and you only voted for, their twelve votes all recorded for you. The only Consolation I could offer him was to tell him that

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if Mr. — had been at home I thought you would have had his twelve votes Likewise.

Forgive me for troubling you with so long a letter, and allow me with the kindest wishes to remain,

Yours most obediently,

ENOS WILLIAMS.

Flowers and snuff were a visible sign of sympathy and understanding, and showed the poor folk in the Workhouse that there was someone who desired to be their friend ; and this human touch grew ever warmer and richer as the years went on.

But much of the value of Mary Clifford's work in Poor Law administration lay in its thoroughness and methodical care. At a time when the science of Local Government and social conditions was only beginning to be understood, she took her place among the pioneers of Poor Law reform, equipped with no technical training, but with a cultured mind, a spiritual understanding, and a disciplined character. The results of faithful accuracy and patient drudgery are only seen by fellow-workers, or after years of experience have won the right to speak with authority to the outside world, and Mary gained her experience by sheer hard work. Mr. J. J. Simpson, clerk to the Bristol Board of Guardians, who observed her work and methods for many years, has described¹ how "very soon practically every unit of the Guardians' institutions became personally known to her, and in the days when official records of cases were

¹ *Bristol Times and Mirror*, January 20th, 1919.

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much more meagre and much less accessible than now she patiently selected the facts and registered them for her own use in connection with her efforts to help them." He has told, too, how much in advance of her day were her views on such matters as right classification, individual treatment, and the schemes for fostering self-respect and independence of character in all the members of "the mixed family under the Guardians' care," and, in consequence, what unpleasant opposition she often met with.

The work of a Poor Law Guardian is often very tedious and extremely painful. It brings him, or her, into contact with hideous evils and loathsome sin. Mary wrote once, after nine years' experience, "I don't believe anyone but a Guardian of a town Workhouse knows how bad people can be, and apparently only women Guardians quite realise about it." Ladies had taken up the work because they hoped and intended to raise human lives, especially the lives of little children, from foulness and cruelty into purity and happiness and honour. To do it, they had to face the worst, and—what made it harder—to face it often in company with men who lacked the instincts of refinement and courtesy. At the end of a discussion of one horrible case in a Bristol slum a gentleman on the Board remarked indignantly that "the matter had been put in a manner as offensive as possible to the ladies."¹

In 1894 Mary Clifford was asked to print a leaflet

¹ *Bristol Mercury*, March 23rd, 1883.

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of "Advice to Women Poor Law Candidates." It sums up the results of her own experience. In it she says :—

"One point you are anxious about is whether it is fair to ask a woman to listen to and consider, with men, the painful cases that occur and have to be dealt with. You see, they *have to be dealt with*. They are, of course, the cases of women, generally of young women, and when they are present, however fallen and degraded, or where their treatment is being discussed and decided on, it must be right that another woman who cares for goodness should be there. It is the knowledge that someone is present who is grieved and ashamed, and who understands what practical step should be taken towards recovery, that brings a sense of wrong, and of better desire, to some hopeless-looking women. At any rate, where women are in disgrace and trouble, there ought other women to be, and very few Englishmen fail to understand this. Their support a great deal more than compensates for an occasional experience of the other kind. On the majority of Boards nothing but consideration is shown. On a few I have heard of a state of things which proves only too clearly the need of a good woman, not perhaps without courage.

"*Regularity of attendance* is very important, for it is the steady, attentive members who really understand the business, and do not miss those unexpected events which often alter a whole course of management. . . .

"It is however by realising that after all we are only very humble fellow-workers in a Divine plan of renewal, and that the things to be done are far

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more God's business than ours, that this burden, or any other, can be carried without overstrain."

This last principle was, of course, the secret of her calm perseverance in the face of all difficulties, and of remarks such as one found in her "Old Maid Book" referring to "events and hopes to make me most thankful . . . the election of the —— against all my efforts and yet turning out, so far, *right*, showing the good hand of God." This and other similar words reveal her willingness to accept judgments other than her own, an attitude not easy to one with opinions so clear and emphatic.

She offers the following rules for Women Guardians :—

"1. In the administration of out-relief let them remember that justice is the paramount thing. They will be beset with personal influence, but it should be resisted altogether. In public work kindness and consideration come in after a case has been decided on just and fair principles, but not before.

"2. Don't be in a hurry to speak at the Board, but when you are quite sure of your point don't be afraid or hesitate, and never mind being defeated.

"3. Be willing to incur responsibility.

"4. Read, listen, gather all the knowledge you can. Invite criticism. Visit every Workhouse within reach. Attend every Poor Law Conference that you can.

"5. Don't let the Workhouse officers think you are always in a hurry. Make time to hear their difficulties at length. Your good temper and hopeful-

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ness and cheerfulness will be a great strength and relief to them, you may be certain.

“ I cannot help adding that if you have good *men* candidates coming forward you should do everything in your power to promote their election.”

Her sympathy and consideration for the Workhouse officers marked all her work as Guardian. In an address to the Ladies' Conference at Liverpool in 1891 she said :—

“ The tone of this big household will of necessity depend on that of the officers. It is very monotonous work, often disappointing ; it is lowering to be so much with people of bad character, or of a mindless, earthly type. Any approval, sympathy, or brightness we can bestow on the women officers will be a good investment on behalf of the inmates.

“ After ten years of office I can look with great satisfaction on the staff of the Workhouse of our Union, and feel that they have in most cases a real desire for the welfare of the people. This they show by their hearty co-operation in our efforts in rescue cases, or in any pleasure we contrive for old or young, as well as in sometimes suggesting improvements which only officers would be likely to think of.”

It was never Mary Clifford's way to thrust herself in, or to act in opposition, where she could possibly win co-operation. But at first the ladies' presence on the Board was so new to the older members and their ideas seemed so revolutionary that even the best intentioned of the old Guardians showed no signs of supporting them, and the ladies found the

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weight of old prejudice and inaction almost immovable. After the first two months she wrote to her brother in India :—

To the Rev. Alfred Clifford.

June 8th, 1882.

I would give my best cap to have you near to pour out to you about my Board ! The regularity you mention and advise we can attain to. I haven't missed yet, and stay all day from 9.30 till 6.0 or 6.30 sometimes. But do you know there does not seem to be any one man on the Board at present to work with. It is scarcely credible. Last week a Guardian told two of us ladies that the potatoes were not good, and appointed to meet at the dinner hour. Well, the two ladies went but did not find the gentleman. The potatoes were some of them uneatable and, it was clear, ought to be complained of. However, the Guardian never said a word, and when we met him on Monday by chance, said, Yes, it was quite true they were not what had been contracted for but he did not *like* to say anything, we ladies should be able to do so, etc. The milk is shocking, but I doubt if anything will be done till *we* do it, though I have begged two sets of men visitors to look into it. It is, I am afraid, irregular to report except in one's visiting week, which occurs three times a year only. In fact, there seems to be no desire to look into things and get them right anywhere except it *may* be in two or three. Everyone hates to act, and all the officials seem paralysed. We must be very cautious and not in a hurry. Mr. — would be anything but pleasant to deal with if one made a mistake.

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It was only natural that one of the first, and always the greatest, of Mary Clifford's cares should be the children. When she became a Guardian the homeless children and those who, even more unfortunate, had been rescued from cruel and vicious homes, were brought up in the Workhouse, or boarded out in private families, but still under the Guardians' care. She felt very deeply the sorrow and tragedy of these little lives, and her love, never wasted in sentimentality, expressed itself in her tender concern and unsparing efforts for their welfare.

Her method of recording the circumstances of every child in the Workhouse was typical of her work as a Guardian :—

“It is very useful to have a register of all the children coming into the Workhouse,” she said in an address¹ to Lady Guardians: “I have always put down all the children who come in, with all the circumstances I can discover. It makes you *au fait* with all the children. I note particulars as to parents, whether orphans, and any special circumstances. Then at the end of these particulars state what you want to do, or to have done; whether the child is to be adopted, boarded out, or whatever ought to be done. Supplement this register with an alphabetical index, and it will be of the greatest use.”

She found how few people understood the loneliness and the dangers to which the young girls were exposed, not only when they were sent out to work for their living, but in the Workhouse, where in those

¹ *On Workhouse Management*, Norwich, March 30th, 1895.

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days they were often in contact with most degraded characters. The girls worked in the laundry with the roughest women, and when after three and a half years by persistent effort she obtained a little separate laundry for them to work in, this most necessary arrangement, Miss Alice Winkworth recalls, was known as "Miss Clifford's fad."

She was closely in touch with Miss Mason, H.M. Inspector of Boarded-out Children. In the second year of her Guardianship she asked Miss Mason to address a meeting in Clifton, which was intended to rouse interest and a sense of responsibility among ladies.

To Miss Mason.

Aug. 14th, 1883.

I want to invite all the people whom I want stirred up, especially Guardians' *wives*. Can you imagine an old Guardian beginning to me last week about the impropriety of ladies looking after little servant girls? Our Board has for so many years set itself against ladies' work that it takes time and patience and a good deal of temper¹ to overcome the old prejudice. We have only been elected a year and a half, and have to be content with small things as yet. . . .

I rather incline to make our meeting turn *not* exclusively on G.F.S., if you don't mind, but on the general subject of Befriending Workhouse Children, and I think it would be wisest for you to give your experience of what is done in other places. . . . I shall make a great effort for Guardians' wives and belongings generally.

¹ *i.e.* temper kept, not lost.

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To Miss Mason.

Oct. 4th, 1884.

. . . Do you see the way to recommending any system of education?

Every month I feel the *great* need of good motherly care for these girls. They have no anchor and are beset by all kinds of faults and often are weak in health. Of course they are the difficult class. Is there any record of the results of boarded-out girls kept? Our Committee seem to me to have been remiss as to following the girls up. It is after sixteen that the mischief begins. I should like to see the age of supervision extended to eighteen.¹ My mind is full of these children. I am very sad about a number of them, and feel we send them out most unfit to contend with life, and you see they have no home to fall back upon.

After three and a half years on the Board she wrote to her brother :—

Oct. 25th, 1885.

After many ups and downs, things at the Work-house do seem in a good train, D.G. We have just, after a scrimmage, got four ladies formally appointed to visit the sick and old. Poor Mr. — ! He said mournfully, after advising the Board to adopt the scheme, "I can't *think* why ladies wish to come here so much. Couldn't they trudge down

¹ The Poor Law Act of 1889 allowed Guardians to adopt children under certain circumstances, and the adoption continued for boys till 16 years of age and for girls to 18 years. Ten years later, 1899, the age was raised to 18 for boys as well as girls.

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into St. Philip's among all those poor creatures there?"

However, in spite of Mr. —— kicking desperately for ten minutes, it was passed, and Mrs. Wakefield, Louisa Fedden, Miss Maurice, and Miss Thomas of Highbury are now appointed, and it is a great comfort to feel that the friendless people have now got friends.

Then another plan I have long wished for is adopted, *i.e.* the girls are to have a little Laundry separate from the pauper women.

Besides this, the G.F.S. ladies headed by Louisa Fedden now look well after the little girls in service, and we have a Benefit Club, and a Band of Hope, and a Sewing Class. And I think I can really look to Mrs. Dodge's sympathy and co-operation: and also I think to Mr. ——'s: that is such a great difficulty removed. I fancy I told you about our exchanging several friendly letters about his long-deferred holiday. Into the last I put some verses, "Dear Saviour, I have nought to plead," and when he came home he brought me two really beautiful photographs of the Tenby coast, and he has been so nice, helping and saving trouble. One is always being shown that if one will trust and wait, beautiful unexpected things will come, and that one need never be cast down overmuch.

Mr. and Mrs. Dodge, the new Master and Matron, appointed in 1885, fulfilled the highest hopes of all who were interested in the good of the people under the Guardians' care. And after the first struggle the ladies soon met with warm support and co-operation and had not to face alone the very unpleasant

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opposition that arose from time to time. One who was on the Board with Mary Clifford says, "We highly respected her for her work's sake, and although she would often take us to task if we did not act in the way she thought best we did not chafe under it, because we always knew her motives were of the best."

The following letter of a later date is an example of the way in which she occasionally took her fellow-workers to task. It was written when nearly a quarter of a century's experience of Guardian work gave her some authority to speak. The subject was the abolition of certain wooden buildings which were used for some of the Workhouse Infirmary patients.

March 8th, 1905.

DEAR MR. —,

I cannot help being disappointed in your letter. One looks to open-minded Guardians, as I have felt you to be, to influence the unreasonable ones and not to give way to them. You know how very much surprise the frequent inconsistency of the Board occasions in outsiders. Can we not rise above this? There was no personal feeling in Mr. — and those who agreed with him. We only want, without loss of time, to make a wise decision possible. Delay is most serious, and is in my opinion *criminal*, because the condemned wards might at any time be the cause of tragedy (in case of a fire). If members like yourself back up further delay, is it wise? is it right?

Pardon my writing.

Truly yours,

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Members of Committees of which she was convener say that if they were not in their places at the time appointed they would receive a polite but firm little note of inquiry from her. She expected from others the standard which she set for herself.

That she spared no pains to train the children under the Guardians' care in temperance principles, and to equip them against the temptations which they would meet with in life, the following incident will testify, as it will illustrate also the happy relations she established with the Poor Law Officers. Miss Evans was mistress of the Girls' School then, and for many years, until the children were moved into "Scattered Homes." Miss Clifford shared her well-justified pride in the splendid health of her girls, their nice clothes, and their good positions when they left the school; and it is Miss Evans who tells this little story with considerable relish.

Miss Clifford came one day to give the girls a temperance talk, and she brought with her the ingredients wherewith to make a good temperance drink. With her own hands she made the drink with hot water in the kitchen, the girls looking on. Miss Evans coming in just then, Miss Clifford said, "I filled the can from this tap." "Well," said outspoken Miss Evans, "if that's where you got the water from, not one of my girls shall touch it. That's bad water in that tap." "Oh," said Miss Clifford, "if you say that, Miss Evans, I shall throw it all away," and she immediately poured all the temperance drink down the sink untasted. And she made the Guardians go to the expense of putting

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new labelled taps so that there should be no danger of any girl drinking the bad water. "Though," added Miss Evans, "not one of the girls would have touched that water if I had told them not to."

Miss Evans and her girls at work in the school would sometimes hear a footstep in the passage outside their classroom. "It's only Miss Clifford," someone would say, and Miss Evans would go out and find her in the kitchen making herself a cup of tea from her own little canister kept there for the purpose; for at the end of a long Board meeting, or Committees, she often stayed on to visit in the Workhouse wards, not getting home till late in the evening.

The Barton Regis Board of Guardians had not emigrated any of the children under its care since 1874. Mary Clifford was familiar with the happy results of such emigration through her knowledge of the work of Mr. Mark Whitwill, Chairman of the Bristol Education Committee.

She sometimes told how, on becoming a Guardian, she had been advised not to open her mouth for a year, but to observe in silence and gather experience. Before the first year was over, however, she asked the Board to give its attention to eleven little boys in the Workhouse School who wished to go to Canada, and immediately she met with one of those foolish and ill-mannered rebuffs to which, in those days, lady Guardians were too often subjected. As she had not brought forward her resolution in the technically correct way, one Guardian opposed it

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strenuously "because he thought the matter had been brought before them in a very improper and uncourteous manner," "the dignity of the Board" had been attacked and the Chairman "insulted"! So the resolution was at first defeated.¹

But she was not alone in her efforts. Other Guardians were anxious to give the boys a new start in life, "free from all taint of pauperism," and Mr. Mark Whitwill, with his usual generosity, offered to bear the largest share of the cost of this venture, and so put a stop to any opposition on the ground of expense,² and in June five of the little boys were brought before the Board ready for Canada, "clad in their new outfit and presenting a very neat and comfortable appearance," and "were given a few words of advice by the Guardians present and hopes were expressed for their welfare in their new homes."³

Mary Clifford kept up a correspondence with very many of the emigrated children for years. Each little party came to her house before they sailed, for a farewell tea in the garden, a treat which they remembered and often referred to in their letters. Many of them wrote to her frequently. Very keenly did she feel the pain of often being unable to satisfy the longing expressed in so many of the letters for knowledge of the writers' parents and family. Sometimes she was thankful that no answer could be given to the question, when she knew the know-

¹ *Bristol Mercury*, February 10th and 24th, 1883.

² *Ibid.*, February 10th and 24th, 1883.

³ *Ibid.*, June 30th, 1883.

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ledge asked for could only bring a burden, and sorrow instead of gladness.

At each New Year Mary Clifford sent to every boy and girl whom she had helped to emigrate to New Brunswick a printed letter of friendly advice and encouragement. Later, instead of a letter her message took the form of a New Year's card. Here are the words of the one she sent in 1892, carefully chosen, so she told a friend, "after hours and hours of meditating and praying a great deal" :—

1892.

Here are three " Cheers " for the New Year :

Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.
Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.
Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

These are the words of One Who wants our life to be happy and true.

Let the old selfishness be forgiven and left behind.

Let us look up and say, " Yes, Lord, Thou art here, I will not be afraid."

Let us not doubt that He will in all things win the day.

" I was very pleased to hear from such an old friend," wrote one girl. " I think the card was very nice and holy-like."

It was many years later, a few weeks after Mary Clifford's death, at the time when the troops were being demobilised after the War, that one of her nieces found herself in a train seated next to a fine-

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looking Canadian soldier. Some conversation began, and the soldier mentioned that his home was in New Brunswick. Many a time had she helped her aunt to address shoals of New Year cards to that part of Canada, and she ventured to ask the soldier whether he knew Miss Clifford's name. In silent astonishment he turned to the speaker. And then, "I was one of her boys!" he exclaimed. "I *worshipped* Miss Clifford!" His tone was full of gratitude as he spoke of his Canadian home, his happy married life, and of the benefits of the temperance pledge which under her influence he had taken and kept. He had supposed she had died long before, or he would have come to see her when he was in Bristol, as indeed other old boys of hers did when they came over in the Canadian Army.

CHAPTER VI

GUARDIAN OF THE POOR (*continued*)

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor ; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom ; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.—Proverbs xxxi. 20, 26.

Giving to those that cannot crave, the voiceless, the o'ertired."—BLAKE, *Book of Thel*.

IN 1893 Mary Clifford was called upon to give evidence before the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor.

Those who have looked into reports of Royal Commissions know that there is no literature more alive with dramatic interest than a Government Blue Book dealing with Poor Law Administration. Here we get down to the soiled warp and woof of the national life and find innumerable vignetted tragedies, sins of the rich and sins of the poor in collision, and the deep surging emotions of the people pressing against the massive indifference of Government and long-established opinions and prejudices.

We are only concerned here, however, with the glimpse that the Blue Book of 1895 gives of Mary Clifford as a Poor Law Guardian. The unadorned verbatim report gives a mental photograph of the grave scene ; the assembled Royal Commissioners,

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with Lord Aberdare in the chair and the Prince of Wales present, and Mary Clifford entering with her striking appearance and quiet dignity of bearing, conscious of the responsibility of the position and eager for the reforms that she knew were urgently needed, though in the event the changes of which the Commission was the precursor were not such as she fully approved.

The masses of facts and opinions which she produced were the result of eleven years' experience of Poor Law work, and some very thorough special research into the ancient charities of the City of Bristol. Reading her answers to the Chairman's questions, one can hear her musical, flexible voice, pitched rather high at first from the nervousness which also threw the opening sentences into a little confusion and repetition; and one can see the descriptive gestures of her hands as in imagination she sees her old city, with its spires and shipping, surrounded by the hills and rich green country over which its suburbs climb and spread:—

“Bristol is in a dip,” she says, “it is like a basin; and the old Bristol Union is in the bottom of the basin. And the second Union, of which I am a Guardian, the Barton Regis Union, includes the east end parishes of Bristol, which continue to spread over the bottom of the basin; and then it extends up the hill into Clifton; and it has also a very large, wide rural district, stretching out to the Severn; and it also has the newly-populated east side of Bristol, and the very spreading and continually increasing neighbourhood of Fishponds and St. George's; all that is a very large district.”

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Then comes her evidence of all that Bristol had done or failed to do for the relief of the aged poor. One feels that she is half proud of the picturesque old charities of Bristol's merchant princes, and at the same time more than half ashamed of the wasteful, even injurious way in which their bequests were being used, and the appalling proportion of people dependent on the Guardians, in spite of the £5,000 income of the ancient charities.

She is closely questioned about the conditions of old people in the Workhouses, and her answers are full of her own personal observation and sympathy, and the imagination and even humour which helped her to understand the hardships of the people with whom she had to deal. Some hardships were real enough—the total lack of trained nursing, the straw beds and cold stone floors, and above all the separation of the aged poor from their families and friends, which she calls “the most barbaric thing in the Poor Law.” But there is surely a twinkle in her eye when being asked, “Do they complain of the pea-soup because it is not properly cooked, or because it is not a proper article of diet?” she answers simply, “The English poor *don't like* pea-soup.”

“My evidence,” she wrote afterwards, “was intended to show that pensions are not needed *here*, if our charities were better managed.”

Her opposition to the principle of Old Age Pensions was perhaps her most—though not her only—unpopular action on the Board. It was in January, 1899, that the subject was discussed and resolutions put forward, and at that time she wrote to a friend

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who was also a Poor Law Guardian (Miss B. Pigott) :—

“ I am very strongly of opinion that State Aid will be a serious national mistake, a blow to our national self-reliance. This is the unpopular side and my amendment was not seconded. It is wrong to give the working class what it isn't, to my thinking, honest and true to give them.”

And about the same time :—

“ I've had a longish Board to-day, less trying than sometimes, though I the reverse of enjoyed leading the opposition to the Pensions Scheme. It is very unpopular to find fault with it, and the working-men are all for it. But it seems to me dishonest not to speak what one thinks. So much that is said is just flattering them. Mr. ——— replied that I don't understand much about the poor. It's too easy to reply in that style. Many is the thing I have refrained from saying about his intense want of sympathy. He is wrapped up in his own point of view, if such a thing is possible. (Could you be wrapped up in a point ? No, you could not.) ”

Whether, if she had lived a generation later, Mary Clifford's attitude would have been different, one has no right to judge. She was far more sensitive to suffering than was generally understood even by those who were nearest to her—not only suffering which lay before her eyes, but in whatever part of the world it existed. Her vivid imagination made her almost as conscious of the one as of the other. Moreover, her intensely keen feelings were immediately transformed into action. Her secret acts of

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kindness and sympathy and care are treasured in the hearts of many who were helpless or in want or merely lonely. And she was no less stirred to action by far-away needs. If action was not possible, there was always prayer. Her feelings could not evaporate: they were concentrated into force in one form or another. Indeed, it was this very force, when it had no outlet, which made her later years of helpless weakness an experience of suffering that not many are capable of understanding. It would therefore be absurd to suppose that she did not feel the hardships of the aged poor. Yet with all her unsparing efforts to help those in distress, her eyes were always fixed on something beyond the relief given. Material well-being was mere dust in the balance when weighed against anything she believed made for character, that is for courage, truth, and responsibility. Family responsibility was to her mind perhaps the highest of human duties and privileges.

Being an idealist, with a scale of values differing from that of the world around her, she was bound at times to meet with misunderstanding. This I believe happened oftener than was apparent, for such was her influence and the charm of her personality that her suggestions were often followed with but meagre understanding of her real motives. The wonder is that with her very decided and outspoken opinions she did not rouse more hostility. She saw her own way so very clear before her that she expected others to see it too—especially when she pointed it out to them. Her charm alone could not

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have won their respect : it was won rather by her genuine humility and transparent sincerity, together with the thorough mastery she showed of any subject she took in hand.

Yet one thinks of her charm, and the quick admiration and affection it drew around her, as a delicate protection for her sensitiveness to the opinions of others. Passages in her letters seem to show that she was half conscious of this. Friendly approval was to her like sunshine to a growing plant, though she never was careful to avoid the frosts from which she shrank. "God tempered the wind to the shorn lamb," and in spite of a nervousness (which no one who saw her suspected), she never was known to flinch from any ordeal she was called upon to face.

She found the work of the Out-relief Committees one of the most arduous and difficult of the tasks of a Poor Law Guardian. None knew better than she that, as she herself said, "pauperism was not confined to the very poor : the essence of pauperism was depending on other people to do our duty," and it was to be found in all classes. But it was for the very poor that she was responsible ; and it is notorious that public money unwisely distributed undermines the effort and independence of those who are on the border-line of destitution. She pointed out that "it was a misnomer to speak of the liberality of Guardians in their treatment of the poor ; there was scope for kindness and charity, but as stewards of public funds Guardians had no opportunities for liberality ; and charity could do a number of things

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which the Poor Law *could not* do." Justice rather than generosity must be their watchword; but it should be justice tempered with humane common sense, and free from the bondage of red tape. There was neither generosity nor justice in giving inadequate relief, just enough for a person to starve upon. One custom which she opposed, though it was supported by the law, was the refusal to give relief in money until all the little savings of an old person were exhausted. And very strongly did she urge that widows with young children should be allowed enough to live upon without having to neglect their homes in order to go out and earn money. Years before this policy was generally adopted in the country she realised that it was not only right, but the truest economy.

All the lady Guardians gave themselves to bettering the condition of one or another class of the sick or forlorn in the Workhouse. In Mary's heart the poor half-witted women, the "Simple Susans," had a warm place, and she made a special study of the whole question of the care and protection of the feeble-minded. She gave evidence before the Royal Commission which was appointed in 1904 to inquire into the subject, and which led to the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913, which gives power to the new Authority (the Mental Deficiency Committee) to provide accommodation for feeble-minded persons, and to make orders for their detention.

But in the earlier years of her Guardianship these, the most helpless of all classes, the homeless semi-imbeciles, were wholly unprotected from the time

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they left the Workhouse or charitable school where they had been brought up. They were always in and out of the Workhouses; the story of their wrecked lives is heart-rending, and the harm done to the community at large incalculable. Without quoting the harrowing records in detail, the following paragraph from a paper read by Mary Clifford at the Poor Law Conference in May, 1891, will give some idea of the conditions then existing and the need for better protection of the feeble-minded :—

“Up to the present time there is nothing before friendless semi-imbecile girls, nothing honest, except the Workhouse wards. Till sixteen years old or thereabouts they are brought up safely, at any rate, without power to leave, in a Workhouse school or in an orphanage or certified industrial school. Every institution knows them. But the time comes when they are no longer of a suitable age for the school. They leave it. The records show the struggles that are made for them, and, in spite of all, the result—the drifting down into a moral sink. I could tell you of two gentle, sweet-faced girls who were in my own Workhouse school six months ago. They were placed out and watched over with really the utmost care. But they were their own mistresses, and nothing could avail to save them. It seemed as if only the lower part of the mind survived: they have both come to utter ruin. In a neighbouring Union thirteen poor little children had belonged to the eight weak-minded women of the same class whom I saw there. Everywhere you will find the same story.”

She earnestly advocated Voluntary Homes, unconnected with Workhouses, for the feeble-minded,

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where they might receive, amid cheerful and comfortable surroundings, the training for such work as they were capable of doing, generally in laundries, and so become, partly at least, self-supporting. Writing of one such home she said: "There is a brightness and interest and an air of hope and progress, and peace and safety, that are very comforting to some of us who have been baffled and grieved over the sad lives we have seen suffering shipwreck."

In the same little pamphlet¹ in which this quotation occurs she also writes:—

"What then can we individually do?"

"Well, even caring about these poor helpless ones is sure to help. If you will watch them, inquire into their lives and histories, and speak of them so as to awaken interest and sympathy, public opinion will grow. To 'open her mouth for the dumb' was the blessed vocation of that good and great woman of the 31st of Proverbs. And surely these are the 'dumb.'"

"Then as interest and sympathy spread, will you try to persuade people to devote themselves to the guidance of these homes? Many who are too old or not strong enough to take up nursing as a vocation, could find a work full of delightful service among these women. There is a child-like simplicity and a very beautiful faith and love in many of them, and such a ministry to the least and lowest is truly Christ-like."

¹ *Help for the Helpless, A plea for the Feeble-Minded*, being a reprint of *How to Help Simple Susan*. By Mary Clifford.

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Mary did her part, by speaking and writing, in helping to start such homes, and she pressed for the much-needed legislation. But she did not only "open her mouth for the dumb," she also stretched out her own hands to these sorrowful ones, and fulfilled in her own inimitable way "the law of kindness." Besides her visits to them in the Workhouse, every summer for several years she entertained a party of the feeble-minded from Barton Regis at tea in her own garden, or took them to the grounds of some hospitable friend, giving the poor things intense pleasure. She wrote to a niece on June 21st, 1892, of one such entertainment in the garden of the Rt. Hon. Lewis Fry, Goldney House, Clifton :—

"My party is just gone—fourteen poor Susans from the Workhouse. They did so enjoy it. We went to Mr. Fry's and got lost for a minute or two in the Grotto, and the gardener gave each a bouquet. Then we trammed back and had sausages and shrimps and gooseberry pie for tea, and Mrs. Newcombe showed them her charming Japanese doll, and then we took a walk in the fields and came back and sang and had cake, which they took away in parcels smiling joyfully."

In another letter, written April 3rd, 1893, she wrote :—

"My poor feeble-minded are going to make, in their evening hours, some clothes for the lepers of Jerusalem nursed by the Moravians. That is rather nice. Two of them want to go out and wash for and attend to them. They would do it faithfully and well."

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She said once in an address:¹ "It is, as we know, the law of our human nature that we are bound to one another, happily for the highest good, but also for evil things. To ignore, to neglect, to despise the lowest and least of our fellow-beings brings loss and danger to all." She sought out those who seemed "appointed to destruction" in this world, in order to bring them hope and the "peace which the world cannot give." From time to time she arranged for talks and addresses to be given to the women in the Workhouse, bringing her friends to speak to them, caring for their mental and spiritual welfare even more than for their bodily comfort. At a time when the Workhouse Chaplain was ill she spent many hours with the dying in the Infirmary, and she visited regularly in the saddest of all sad places, the Lock Ward.

She was a generation before her time in her desire for proper classification in Workhouses, seeing from the beginning the moral evil of herding together the bad and the merely unfortunate. The "classes" which she felt it most necessary to remove or to protect as far as possible from all contact with evil were first of all the children, and secondly the young, unmarried mothers who, under good influences and through their own love and sense of responsibility towards their children, might be helped to live good and wholesome lives. Many of these young mothers (one-third was the proportion computed in 1905) were feeble-minded, and required

¹ Paper read at the Poor Law Conference at Malvern, May, 1891, on *The Better Care of Semi-imbecile Women*.

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special treatment; but many of the remainder were weak and ignorant rather than vicious, and the moral dangers that they met with in the Workhouse through contact with women of depraved character haunted her to the end.¹

“We, as Guardians,” she said, “should do all in our power to prevent the contamination of the many comparatively innocent girls who come into our wards.” “My own experience points to the extreme difficulty of arranging so as for these girls to be in anything but a bad moral atmosphere. . . . A Workhouse is a place of hardship, as indeed it ought, for the young and healthy, to be. But we have no more right to subject our inmates to wards polluted with bad conversation and bad conduct, than we have to put them into wards infected with fever. . . . The matrons, who so often receive these forlorn, down-hearted younger girls with kindness and consideration on their admission to the house, soon see what they are in character, and every Board of Guardians should make sure that it is *possible* for the better kind to have either a quiet dormitory, with well-conducted inmates, or one in which a night attendant is on duty. The same thing applies to the room where evenings and Sundays are spent. The presence of a good official is as effectual as good classification in repressing bad things, and far better in its power of producing good things. A more rewarding vocation than that

¹ The possibility of right classification by the building of the new Infirmary at Southmead, near Bristol, was postponed by the War, when the buildings were used as a Military Hospital. Now (1920) the classification of which she began to see the need in 1882 is about to be accomplished.

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of assistant in a Workhouse Able Ward it is difficult to find, for man or woman who truly cares to lift up those that are down and to make the world a cleaner place. Many a woman with her heart softened by trouble turns to better things in the Workhouse Wards.”¹

If the Workhouse officials at Barton Regis were grateful to Mary Clifford for the sympathy and encouragement which inspired them to rise to their true vocation, no less did she show her appreciation of their difficult, hidden work, speaking of it in public and private with the warmest, sincerest praise.

So large a share of her heart and mind were given to this Workhouse rescue work throughout her busiest years, and even while failing health obliged her to give up all other responsibilities, that her aims and the principles on which she acted must be told in her own words, taken from papers read at various conferences.

She said to a conference of Poor Law Guardians :—²

“The sight of the long stream of these young mothers entering our Workhouses is a most disheartening one. The thought becomes urgent, ‘Something ought to be done to cause that stream to cease.’ The first necessity is to inquire into the reasons of its existence. The longer we study the

¹ Report of the 31st Annual Poor Law Conference, London, December, 1905.

² The passages that follow are taken from papers read at Poor Law Conferences in December, 1905, and October, 1906, and a paper on *Unmarried Mothers and their Children* (undated).

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problem the more unavoidable is the conclusion that there is no short-cut to its solution.

"It is not that there is no solution. The remedies exist, thank God ; we are sure of that ; but like the remedies of a physical illness they need careful treatment, and a new atmosphere of health and faith and hope to be created. And they need *time*.

"The maxim cannot be too much remembered, 'In trying to cure an evil effect, see above all things that your remedy does not aggravate its cause.' It is not enough (though sometimes it has seemed a comfort) to *do something*. It matters so considerably that it is the right something. . . .

"The housing question, the health question, the question of education, especially of religious education in its widest and highest sense, all come in. We are to-day concerned with the girls, but does not everything we have said apply with equal force to the lads who become the young unmarried fathers ? . . .

"The evil, it must be remembered, has come into existence before we see them. We have to deal only with the result, a result which in itself is not evil. Motherhood is not evil, and as mothers they are entering a new relationship which ought to wake them up into unselfishness, self-restraint, and thoughtfulness. . . . We have a great opportunity of, in some measure, helping to set things right. And this, it seems to me, in three directions : (1) It is possible to raise the characters of many of these women ; (2) it is possible to lessen the waste of infant life and the suffering of child life ; and (3) it is possible to lift the standard of public morality higher by making clear the responsibility of not one only, but of both parents, to maintain their child."

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“The girls, whatever their history, come to us in connection with the sacred fact of motherhood—and that, let us remember, is the one hopeful and ennobling element in the case. To treat that fact in itself as a crime . . . is to commit a dangerous mistake. We must go farther back and look for the real evil and find its cause. Is it not, in nearly all these cases, the fatal, reckless irresponsibility of both father and mother that is the root and cause of the trouble? To check it we must bring home to both the sense of responsibility and the sense of duty. They must see, and the community must see, that life is a serious thing, that responsibility cannot be shirked, and that the only way of peace is to face our duties and take up our burdens. That is the real and the one satisfactory deterrent to continued wrong-doing. The father, therefore, must not be allowed to evade the maintenance of his child, and the mother must be saved through her self-denying mother-love.”

“It is a comfort to us who want to help them that utter failure is not the same thing as utter hopelessness. Hope remains. A Workhouse, lowest among human institutions, has often reminded me of our world. It was when we were gone astray and lost that the Deliverer came. And not only that, but in the very penalty and consequence of sin lay hidden an antidote—life sprang out of accepted punishment. Let us bear in mind, however, that the penalty must be accepted, not evaded. There do not in the spiritual kingdom seem to be short-cuts to restoration. . . .

“Here in the midst of the trouble and the deserved misery is the remedy. The child, which they so often thoughtlessly call ‘the misfortune,’ is meant

to be the door of hope and the means of recovery. If the mother comes to accept the child as the one good sacred part in all the sorrow and to welcome the toil and the self-denial, and all the rest that her love will ask of herself, she will rise to a perfectly new idea of motherhood and of life and duty and responsibility. . . .

"The ordinary girl loves her baby, but loves herself a good deal more. The girl who has learnt true motherhood cares for herself, but loves her child enough to put herself in the background, and that is the key to happiness in duty. . . .

"I have seen the sweetest companies of Botticelli-like infants in Workhouse nurseries—lovely, happy, kicking babies, and heavenly, sleeping babies with mothers' eyes looking down on them full of love and full of pride. . . .

"As we recognise that the child is to be, under God Himself, the motive power in their life, it is plain that mother and baby should be as little as possible separated from one another.

"The ideal thing no doubt is such a home as that at Hayling—the St. Andrew's Home—worked by the diocesan Deaconesses. It is the most perfect plan we know of for an inexperienced young girl with a teachable nature who desires to learn to do well. Only first cases are received. Mother and child live together there for two years, and learn to love and depend on each other as in no other place I have ever known. The mother all the time is being taught the skilled industry of domestic service or of laundry work, and she is being educated by receiving wages. There is a certain amount of freedom and of innocent gaiety. Generally a deep affection springs up between mother and child, and

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then follows, we observe with thankfulness, a real tough sense of duty and the habit of perseverance.

"The physical result is health and happiness, and therefore an inclination to goodness. This is what we long to do for all our hopeful cases. The multiplication of homes like St. Andrew's, Hayling, is what we should indeed love to see."

She never ceased to urge the need of sufficiently long residence for the young mothers, both for the sake of training and to give time for the love and responsibility of motherhood to grow and develop. But in the Workhouse nursery this was not possible, and she made the best of the opportunities that there were. Almost from the beginning of her Guardianship she held or arranged for classes for the girls, for religious instruction, and to teach them in simple, practical ways about the rules of health, both for themselves and their babies. Then when the young mothers were discharged and had to work to support themselves and their children, she visited them in their homes, and visited also the babies in charge of foster-mothers. But later she had to leave this part of the work to others. She formed a Voluntary Aid Committee of ladies to help the girls through all their loneliness and difficulty.

"Then comes the time of greatest stress," she wrote, "the test of what a girl is going to be. Those who place her out at work must watch over her and cheer and encourage her in what often is a long, lonely, hard—very hard—struggle. The girls are, as we know, generally of a somewhat inferior type.

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They are not worth high wages. Help in money is often a necessity, especially if no maintenance order is attainable. In any case there will be a hard struggle for the mother. Very seldom can she honestly have any new clothes ; even a pair of boots is hard to afford. No riding in trams, no common pleasures come her way. Does she really love herself best, or is the little face breaking into a smile of welcome the supreme attraction ? Has duty become happiness ? We must try to make her struggle a hopeful and a prevailing one. We must see that she need not go into debt to the foster-mother. We must make sure that, if she is in service, the mistress knows of the existence of the baby. It will be a great thing if she thinks we respect her.

“Deeper than all this, we must pray that there may be a spiritual bond between us, and that when the child is dedicated to God in its baptism there may be in the mother’s heart a definite acceptance of His fatherly care for both herself and the child. So that, as we saw just now, out of the gloom and the trouble shines the child as the human means of restoration.”

Such was Mary Clifford’s work as Guardian of the Poor, and such the clear light she made to shine on these difficult problems : and some further extracts from her own graphic letters will express, as no one else’s words can, the spirit in which she devoted herself to her responsibilities ; her deeply religious motives, her personal care for anyone she helped, her patience and humility and the courage with which she faced what was petty and ugly and disheartening ; and withal her humour and hearty

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enjoyment of all that was true and lovely and of good report even amid the dreary circumstances of Poor Law work.

To the Rev. A. Clifford.

Aug. 26th, 1886.

I am still rather tired after the Workhouse School Treat yesterday, but it was the pleasantest we ever had, though as it was to be at Weston our expectations had been rather low. However, the day was cool and fine and the children faultlessly good and radiantly happy. One of our little servants exclaimed on seeing another Treat, "I wouldn't go with *that* Treat for *any* money. Give me the Barton Regis Treat." Such is *esprit de corps*!

We had an "old girl" who had kept her place for fifteen years and never gets an outing except this annual Treat. She has only one eye, gets very low wages, has to put her helpless mistress to bed every night, attends to an old lady of ninety-two, and waits on the other lodgers. She was enjoying with enthusiasm, had gathered a long black tail of seaweed, and her pocket-handkerchief was stuffed with common pebbles for her mistress, and she bought a bunch of country flowers. How happy she looked.

To Miss B. Pigott.

A longish Board day, it was nearly four when I got out of the Board Room. I generally now have a long Committee after the Board; but it was not disagreeable, things went right I believe, though not always exactly as I intended. And then I had some visiting, looking narrowly after the sick children,

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having talk and reading in the Lock Ward, and the ward where the young women with babies are—the first very forlorn and sad and humanly hopeless, such wrecks; for the hopeful ones I got them to receive in the nice Voluntary Lock Hospital.

To Miss Pigott, written on a seaside holiday.

BUDE,

July, 1889.

This afternoon I have been to the Workhouse, such an odd little place, all done in the reverse of red-tape manner, the old women wearing their own clothes and bringing in their own feather beds. A most kind-hearted matron as you may imagine. I did, however, long to get out the twenty children, who seemed much in need of it.

There is a rainbow just appearing in the S.E., a nearly upright pillar of fair colours, and there is a storm pouring down beside it.

I feel I should rather like to be in a solitary place with the capacity to enjoy and rest. Life seems so taken up with surface waves. More and more one is sure that to have the mind of Christ is the thing if one is to help people. If any way they see His beauty and draw near to God, *what a step*—never to be lost again I should think.

To the Rev. A. Clifford.

We have been having a roughish bit at the Board lately, Miss Woollam and I. Major Rumsey and several other intelligent men are away, and Mr. — and Mr. — are using the opportunity to make havoc. Last Friday they seem to have got their particular friends to come, and carried, by one vote, sending a

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letter to the Home Secretary asking him to move two naughty girls, whom we had sent to an Industrial School, away. I don't suppose the Home Secretary will do it, however. I had a blow too this morning. Mr. ——— kindly came up to see me. I told him my troubles about the two girls, and then asked him if he did not think that in Board Schools the two Sacraments ought to be taught, not denominationally, but as simple commands of Christ. There is a girl dying unbaptised in the ——— School, and several little ones besides [unbaptised]. To my amazement he said he did not consider it essential, *i.e.* a thing that mattered much, and what would the Quakers say? Now isn't it strange that a real Christian earnest man should be so blind. He could only bring St. Paul's words, "I thank God I baptised none of you." It has made me quite sad all day; and he is such a good man.

The following extracts are from letters to Miss Blanche Pigott:—

PAINSWICK,

1890.

I am here till Tuesday with dear, good, true, devoted-to-work Miss Wemyss. They sat up last night, talking sadly over the strange depravity of some (few, I hope) children. It is tremendous strength to have the Human Nature of our Lord part of our redeemed nature. In Him the victory is sure for holiness and purity.

I brought a little boy I have adopted for Canada. It is a great weighty thing to take a child and give it a new direction to its life. The little mite is very

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fond of me, a loving little soul. He comes of the lowest kind of stock, and yet is nice in all his ways. I feel much drawn to him.

(*Undated.*)

It looks now as if we might quite fairly expect to get our Poor Law Protection of Children Bill completed. We have got all that we wanted as to deserted children. Now we want power over children in Workhouses of bad parents. Surely we shall get it now that the principle of protection is so wonderfully recognised.

I am writing in the Police Court, waiting a sad case to come on, of one of my girls who is so dishonest that a Reformatory School seems the only thing. . . . (Later) Poor B.'s case ended. She is to go to a Reformatory School for five years and to prison for ten days. I don't think the latter will injure her. She is not a sensitive girl, but cried sadly while I was with her after the trial in the cell. She seems to have untruth and dishonesty in her very bones, it crops up at every turn. I have looked after her for seven years. Poor child, her mother is quite bad. Do pray for her.

Cotton Strike in Bristol.

Nov. 28th, 1889.

The Cotton people went to work this morning. No increase of wages, but many grievances redressed. We are having a heavy time of tackling these huge labour questions, and have been meeting some of the men and women privately. The women are at present very open to being led, the men very full

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of reasoning of the socialist kind. Miss Black came and helped the final arrangements. I think there is much more to come on all hands. They have almost offered to take us into their counsels. Personally I don't think I can do it. If I did, the Workhouse affairs would have to drop out to a great extent, and I don't feel called to let them go at present. But my mind goes out to these women and girls. I am going over to see some of them on Saturday. One can only pray—the first four petitions of the Lord's Prayer. . . . I feel if I took up Trade Questions I could not do my work for people at the Workhouse, and that is what the Lord has trusted me with, and it takes up nearly all I have and am.

Housing. . . . What *can* be done to sting people's minds and consciences into caring? If only they would, how soon outwardly hopeless conditions would alter.

The stolidity of these country gentlefolk is—well, a heavy huge-feather bed of a burden.

The Board yesterday was all right. I had the rare experience of completely convincing them about something. Even Mr. — made a speech to say he agreed, mentioning it to be nearly without precedent, such a thing on his part.

The poor girl in the Lock Room still lingers. I think she has really repented and come to Christ—so glad she will be safe.

Those emigrating boys went off in high spirits. Little Floxton, who has a dreamy, poetic look in his eyes, but is chiefly known as a great fighter, asked me most earnestly "if there were still fairies in the

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world ? ” and proceeded to tell me one after another of Hans Andersen’s tales.

In the train from Weston-super-Mare.

I have just left the children an hour before they go, being rather tired with conducting them about on donkeys or otherwise. But they have been most good and happy, and the torrents of rain kept off till tea-time. It is such an odd day for them, and they are given complete liberty to go off over the beach and town exactly as they like. Thirty-three went to the Pier with me, but generally they go off quite independently, and no one gets really permanently lost, though one infant was brought to me with red eyes by an old sailor, found in a wood a mile away crying bitterly. My green cloak made a kind of wigwam in which they sheltered during rain, only their legs appearing. It was pleasant to see them so heartily and innocently happy.

Sept. 11th, 1890.

I am just back from my Workhouse boys’ treat (seventy), a private one I give, a long afternoon on the Downs, ornamented with cake and lemon-kali. The poor little lads were very good and happy. We spent some time lying on the grass with a beautiful sunset going on, I telling desert island stories. I feel one ought to go freely into the impossible. They did so like it all, and we had such kindness in getting our tea at the Factory Girls’ Home of Rest. The Workhouse children rouse an enthusiasm of kindness and pity in women’s hearts.

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Sept. 19th.

Think of me on Monday inspecting Boarded-out Children. A very small infant of four years old came up to me in the playground and lisped out that it wanted to go to Canada. Bless it, little dear.

To the Rev. A. Clifford.

March 2nd, 1899.

I spent the afternoon giving a popular lecture on our doings for the Workhouse children to 150 charming poor women, members of the seven local branches of the Co-operative Guild. Their interest and enthusiasm were quite inspiring. They could hardly sit still, and at the conclusion rose up and made excellent little speeches. "As a member of a public body I feel we ought to go and see what the Workhouse is like." "I think the spotted pinafores those children in the Homes wear *spot* them as different to other children." One hearty motherly woman proposed that a few others should take in one or two children at a nominal sum and bring them up with their own—*she* could not, her public duties engaging her so much. Then they asked a number of very intelligent questions, and moved and seconded a vote of thanks, all the time being perfectly simple and affectionate and withal so unselfish and high-minded, rejoicing that they were helping in their Poor Rate to pay for neglected children to be well brought up. I am to go again in May. These Guilds meet once a week and talk over subjects of general interest. They *all* wanted to come and see the Homes. I offered to conduct a deputation of three from each Branch. Dear Carrie May walked home with me. It is quite refreshing after all our weary wrangling to get among such eager and generous creatures.

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June 10th, 1889.

I thought of the great healing beauty of the fields as I did the small bit of rail to Barton Regis yesterday. Oh, the cloth of gold of the buttercups in the flat meadows, and the growing spears of grass in millions!

Jan. 9th, 1891.

What so often happens to me is a thought coming down when I am praying for wisdom. I find it, it comes like a rainbow suddenly, and one feels it is His.



CHAPTER VII

HOME-MAKING

And he that hath not this joy here, lacks one of the best pieces of his evidence for the joys of Heaven ; and hath neglected or refused that Earnest by which God uses to bind His bargains, that true joy in this world shall flow into the joy of Heaven as a river flows into the sea.

DONNE'S *Sermons*.

ONE of Mary Clifford's friends, whose friendship with her, like that of so many others, began amid public meetings and conferences, wrote with true insight, "I remember thinking that although her work might be taking her into the light of publicity, she always carried with her that unmistakable fragrance and delicacy so inseparable from a beautiful home life."¹ This "sense of home," as another friend put it, was one of the things that attracted people towards her, and marked her as being different from others in all the stress of public work.

Mary's home made her what she was. And it is equally true that from early years, and more and more as her life went on, she made her home. She loved always to have her relations near her. She felt strongly that it was her vocation to be, as she said, "the pivot of the family." She spared no pains to keep in touch with more distant relations, and family calls were always put first of all. If anyone

¹ The Lady Battersea, *National Council of Women, Occasional Paper*, March, 1919.

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n the family was ill it was Mary who at once took up the burden of all necessary arrangements, and even of nursing: public work and responsibilities came second, though no excuse of mere fatigue made her neglect these.

If anyone was going on a journey Mary entered into every plan with enthusiasm and provided all sorts of little unexpected comforts for the traveller, such as never would have occurred to more self-centred imaginations. One of her preparations for her own journey to India in 1896 was the filling of a little scrap-book with pictures, so that by its means she could make friends with and amuse any children there might be on board the ship. Certain pages were filled with "Sunday pictures," the rest with every-day ones. Not that she would forbid ordinary pictures on Sunday, but she liked children to feel that Sunday had a special, happy character of its own.

An increase in her own household (it must be called her own, for no matter who made their homes in it, she was always looked to as the head) added greatly to her cares, but also to the enjoyment of her life. Her sister Margaret had married, in India, the Rev. Henry Williams, C.M.S. missionary in Bengal. She came home to Redland in 1885 bringing her two baby girls, and except for one more brief visit to India with her husband, she remained there with her children. A new side of Mary's character, her joy in being an aunt, comes out now in her letters. Accounts of her Poor Law work, dreary and difficult Board meetings, and all kinds of public interests and rapidly increasing

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responsibilities, are interspersed with stories of the children which show her intense pleasure in them and her understanding of children's minds.

To the Rev. Alfred Clifford.

REDLAND GREEN,

July 7th, 1885.

MY ALFRED,—Our babies get happier and happier. Gwen laughs and shouts when at play but is a very serious child in between whiles. The Choto [Bengali for "little one"] looks much better and is not quite so plaintive: a little bit less dove-like and more lamb-like. She and Gwen squeak at each other inarticulately like young birds, and both shout together. Little Mamie is thought by some people to be a little like me; a great compliment to me of course. She is a darling little thing. Claire is toppled over with pride because Choto has twice to-day held out her arms to her.

Thank you, my Alfred, for my too beautiful agate beads. They look very pretty indeed on my sage-green gown.

We have had such a nice tea-party to-night, fifteen old Kingsdown friends—Colliers, Jackson, Uptons, Bradfields, etc., etc., sitting down. Good cold ham, etc. Such hearty affection. It was to meet Margaret, and my canvassing was just thrown in. The converse was chiefly missionary. Upton testified much dislike to the god Ganesh. "I shouldn't like to meet him alive without I could put my foot upon him." "Perhaps," remarked Mr. Kritchill, "he might be life-size." "Oh, then," said Upton, "I could stand up to him."

Good night.

YOUR MOLLY.

MARY CLIFFORD

To the same.

Aug. 2nd.

That little Choto's manner is quite unique: *e.g.* I approach her in the morning as she descends to breakfast in nurse's arms. The moment she sees me she throws back her head with a look of indescribable longing and stretches out her little arms with fervent, impatient affection. Of course it is irresistible and her Aunt takes her, feeling much pleased at such a display of partiality. We go upstairs and encounter Aunt Lizzie, when out go Choto's arms again and with a delicious smile she entreats to be transferred. She is an absolute lamb. Aunt Lizzie is a great favourite with her. She prefers her to everyone except Mama. What can poor Grandpapa do when he is at family prayers and Choto suddenly appears, looking through the bars of his chair, with an infinite sense of welcome and wreathed in smiles? No one has ever been cross to her in her life, and she is always hailed with joy.

In 1886 Alfred Clifford married Miss Amy Bernard, who was working in Bengal under a Zenana Missionary Society. She was a niece of John and Henry Lawrence, and three of her sisters were also missionaries in India. His family and hers had known each other since their childhood, and the welcome to the new sister was full of love and gladness. "Amy is now one of us and in the midst," wrote Mary to her brother after the wedding, which took place in India; "I shall write to her instead of you sometimes, and *vice versa*."

Margaret had returned to India, leaving the elder of her children at home. She was only abroad fifteen months, and while she was away Mr. Clifford

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died. The two following letters were written to her during this time :—

MY OWN LITTLE MIG,—You should have seen your little lamb standing by Aunt Liz to hear the part of your letter about Choto, too much interested to smile but crying out, “ Oh, isn’t that a pretty part ? ” But at mention of the sunset, gold against blue, she broke into a loud and cheerful laugh, as she does at anything very much to the point or very satisfactory (she did last night in the story of the storm at sea when Peter called out, “ Lord, save me ”). It isn’t anything to do with fun but with pleasure on her part.

All you say of the mission is deeply interesting. Poor D—, we often pray for her. I think the deterioration of Christians is the saddest thing I know—and a matter one ought to watch oneself about. Ugly faults creep in and the character hardens and these things become habits, and generally there is no one to tell us, or we don’t believe them if they do, and the beauty of the character so much goes. Lovely as a good child is, I think a good old person far more lovely. Aunt Sarah, how sweet her memory is, and many, many, many others, thank God. I don’t think one can *do* anything but trust for the day, and we are not to be anxious about this more than about other things. After all, our beauty of character is not a thing to work for, but the beauty of Christ’s name.

After their father’s death :—

REDLAND GREEN,
1886.

MY OWN MARGARET,—I hope you are having a birthday of peace and good and loving gifts. Here it is a glorious June day ; an exquisite sky, such

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white clouds on pure blue. Why don't we prize and rejoice in skies more? . . .

Your dear letter after receiving our full accounts about the beloved Dad have just come. . . . Yes, that extremely beautiful appearance was balm to the recollection of all the troubled distressed look before ; and even more than that, it seemed a token of the inward and hidden work of grace, the effect of God's work within. I like Mr. Jukes's idea of the heavenly body which grows—invisibly—and is the clothing of the soul. It fits in quite well with the Dad's own view. . . This spiritual body becomes perfect and beautiful according to the work of grace. One felt his spiritual body was most likely, or even certainly, like the image left us.

When Margaret's two little boys were born in 1887 and 1888 children were more than ever part of Mary's life. She was Godmother to the elder, John. One of her letters begins by lamenting that there had been no letter from either of her brothers or her brother-in-law, and as she always greatly appreciated having a masculine mind to depend on for advice, she goes on :—

“ So we are lonely indeed, and have no one to depend on but John and Anthony. The latter person has all the spirit of—I may say without exaggeration—a robin. He rushes to the combat and at times seems to scorn the idea of flight or protection. John takes up Anthony and uncles him a good deal : he is very fond of him. John's flat contradictoriness grows and increases. I : ‘ She's a dear old Mother.’ John : ‘ She is *not* old.’ I : ‘ She's a dear young Mother.’ John : ‘ She is *not*.’ I : ‘ What is she then ? ’ John : ‘ She's *Mother*.’ ”

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Mary's exuberant high spirits and humour were rather overwhelming to some moods of childhood. The following is from a letter of Margaret's about one of the children who had been a prey to nervous imaginings :—

“ A few days ago she asked Claire if there were any cannibals in England. ‘ No,’ said Claire, ‘ and not many anywhere.’ ‘ What should we do to a cannibal ? ’ C. : ‘ We should treat him kindly but firmly.’ *Mary also suggested that they should be given regular meals.*”

It was a truly Franciscan proposal, but small comfort to the child, who knew nothing of the converted Wolf of Gubbio ! But one can hear Mary's emphatic tone, while she maintained a twinkling solemnity. After making a pun she always exploded with laughter.

Anthony's little sayings were written down, treasured and delighted in by his “ Aunt Mamie.” The imagination in them was akin to her own.

“ When we went to a cowslip field in April,” she wrote of him at the age of three, “ he, being lazy, picked no cowslips, but presently observed, rather to himself, ‘ A 'ittle lady sitting in a 'igh chair.’ And not long afterwards to B. and me, looking at some nearly dead Marguerite daisies with petals turned back, ‘ they 'ave 'ittle cloaks on ! ’ ”

On a holiday journey to the seaside, “ the children were in ecstasies. During the railway journey Anthony could only make noises of joy, like a little doggie, till at last he said, looking at the River Teign all in the sunshine, with its green opposite shore, ‘ A happy land, far, far away ’—quoting the children's hymn about heaven.”

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“ ‘ Which is the way to far away ? ’ asked Anthony the other day. ‘ Is there a long dark tunnel before you get there ? ’ ”

“ Anthony remarked as I left the room, ‘ Mine Aunt Molly is very dear.’ Lovable, isn’t it ? ”

It became a favourite castle in the air of Mary’s in later years to keep a small school for little boys.

At Easter, 1890, Henry Williams had been ordered home by his doctor in India, but it was thought that an operation would fully restore his health, and he hoped to take Margaret and Anthony back to India with him. Mary wrote to her friend, Miss Blanche Pigott, at that time :—

We are anxiously waiting the decision to be made whether Margaret is to go back with her husband this autumn. It is painful and difficult for her to leave the children. She would take the baby. Ask for us to have the mind and judgment of Christ. It is so difficult to be quite fair when one can’t help longing to keep her for the sake of the children, they need her so. Up to Friday week there was no idea of her going, and just then we had all been so unusually and deliciously happy together. I think it is very kind of God not to let us know things long before.

But the sorrow that fell was not the one that was foreseen. Henry Williams went to London for the operation, and Margaret went with him. But after his long years of hard work in India he had not the strength to recover. He died just before Mary could reach them. She wrote then to her brother in India :—

Margaret is very wonderful. Her absolute simplicity of character makes things so much less

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difficult. The children have been such a comfort. It did not seem to occur to them that there was anything very sad or gloomy. Johnny's idea now is to provide tiny pleasures for his mother and to sit by her. "Would you like to see my little spade?" etc., etc. . . . The loss to you out there one simply cannot think of. One only knows it is God's business and His care.

So the children with their mother lived on in the happy Redland home where Mary ruled. She ruled and she served. Her strength and wisdom and bracing courage were there for all to turn to. Her gaiety was the atmosphere in which we all lived; it sparkled, it flowed forth, it lighted up our home like morning sunlight. She loved home life, and enjoyed the lesser acts of service, watering the garden on a summer evening, or sweeping the leaves from the path; carrying home parcels from the more economical city shops in her capacious string bag when she came back from her Board meetings or visiting. She was always very busy, but she never seemed to live in a rush, for she did everything calmly and deliberately and with enjoyment. Numbers of visitors of every rank came to the house; and beggars were a daily occurrence, at any rate during her Guardian years. They sat in the hall and drank cocoa and ate bread and cheese, and went away with the advice or help they required. She never refused them food provided they ate it before they left the house, and she said she would rather err in helping a dishonest person than fail to help one who was in real need.

Meal-times, when all the members of the family met together, were in her eyes one of the chief bonds

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of family life, and punctuality at them was an almost sacred duty. She would beg and entreat her family to be punctual, and a late-comer was reproached with a half-humorous lament : " I toiled and moiled to get this nice dinner for you, and you don't care if it's all spoilt."

But it was not the food that mattered most to her. Her delight was in the sight of the united family. She herself at the head of the table was the life of the party, entering with zest into all the subjects of conversation, or bubbling over with merriment and nonsense. In a family of seven or more, four of them young, discussion often waxed warm and opinions were sharply divided. But, whether or not she remembered it, she acted on the observation she had made when she was twenty, " boys and girls hate being dictated to even by an affectionate aunt," and with all her strong opinions and hard-won wisdom, it is beautiful to look back and remember how completely she allowed each life its perfect freedom. There was, for instance, never a trace of interference with the mother's influence in the lives of the children who were growing up under the same roof. This was the outcome of a selflessness not often attained by strong personalities. When discussion became heated she listened silently until her opinion was asked for, and then gave it, carefully adjusting the balance of the argument and offering clear reasons for what she said. If she offered advice, which happened rarely, it was with such gentleness—diffidence almost—that it disarmed all opposition or prejudice. She was gently courteous to the self-assertion of others, having, as far as others could see, wholly conquered the natural tendency in herself.

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As soon as the meal was ended, sometimes even between the courses, she often brought out a large work-bag and began quite shamelessly to do her mending. At this her family sometimes protested, but she only smiled and calmly persisted. I do not think it ever occurred to them that she probably had no other time in which to do it. When the assembled family dispersed she generally managed to secure the services of one or another to leave a letter or two for her, if their way could possibly be made to lie in a convenient direction, and so save stamps ; for her correspondence and its cost in postage were very heavy. Handing the letters with careful directions, she would add genially, "And my kind regards to *all* you meet." Or if it was herself who was obliged to leave the merry party, she would get up, often with a passing look of seriousness at the thought of the business or committee which lay ahead—perhaps dealing with painful, disappointing matters—but at some parting shot would turn and say with hearty affection, "Well, I see *nothing* to like in *you* !"—and screw up her face into her favourite little grimace, spontaneous and elf-like, drawing forth shouts of laughter.

She wrote this once in a letter to her twelve-year-old nephew (it was in jest, but it was like her to write it, sympathising with the schoolboy's devotion to his mother) :—

I heard a nice sentence on Thursday—

A bad mother
is better than
a good Aunt.

What then must a good mother be ? ? ? ?

Your loving humble Ant,

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"Ant," as in Somersetshire we pronounce Aunt, was felt to express her busy life, and she submitted meekly and merrily to the application of the following verses :—

My child, observe the useful Ant,
How hard she works all day.
She works as hard as adamant—
(That 's very hard they say.)
She has no time to gallivant,
She has no time to play ;
Let Fido chase his tail all day,
Let Kitty play at tag—
She has no time to throw away,
She has no tail to wag.
She scurries round from morn to night,
She never, never sleeps.
She seizes everything in sight,
And drags it home with all her might,
And all she takes she keeps.¹

The last line would be hurled at her with indignant lamentations when from time to time her orderly mind drove her to tidy up (and so cause to disappear) the property which the rest of the family left strewn about the dining-room.

Her own room was always in order ; yet it was a very full one. At first in that crowded household she had inhabited a ground floor room looking out into the garden. When her Aunt Elizabeth Hassell died, in 1894, Mary moved into her large sunny room upstairs. Its walls gradually became covered with pictures, hung close together with hardly any space between. A gate-legged table, surrounded with sets of pigeon-holes and a small deal cabinet of

¹ *A Child's Primer of Natural History*, by Oliver Herford.
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drawers, made an island of furniture in the middle of the wide floor, where stood for many years tall spreading palms and a eucalyptus. Beneath, the large waste-paper basket, which was a carpenter's frail, overflowed with her daily correspondence. A high-backed couch stood in the window. It had been in her childhood's nursery and was shabby with age, but its Spartan severity was tempered with two or three enormous cushions covered in plain green or gold sateen. In the spring the window-sills were bright with crocuses and tulips, and blue tits visited them from the wych-elm close by. At the bottom of the little garden a tall pear tree, an elder, and a pink almond hid the slate roofs of Clifton, allowing a little peep of Dundry and distant Mendip. To the left she looked down on an ancient mulberry tree; and beyond, over the hill of Kingsdown, the music of the city bells came to her from the deep hollow where Bristol lay. On the right, beyond the neighbour's garden, two fields, golden in spring with buttercups and divided by a wonderful hawthorn hedge (she called it *her* hedge), sloped up to a dignified mass of buildings and trees, Redland Hill House, set among ancient elms, beeches, and a quivering aspen, over which and through which the sunsets poured their golden and rosy light. The view was reflected in the long looking-glass that hung on the wall opposite the windows, above low bookcases. Along the top of it were arranged tiny Japanese toys and china animals—a store whence a present could be taken for any small visitor. The small wooden trestle bed was in one corner, spread with a green cover embroidered by her friend, Blanche

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Pigott, or, on special occasions, by an exquisite coverlet worked for her by the girls of St. Agnes' Club in Bristol. In other corners stood tall wardrobes and chests of drawers, in which lay her two or three best dresses carefully folded with lavender; and also in certain interesting drawers numbers of family relics, dating back a century or more. The washstand was an original arrangement of an old spindle-legged set of drawers on which were spread large blue dishes and a square basin to match. A quaint old jug and little Italian pots took the place of the conventional soap dish and tumbler and water bottle, and a handsome blue Italian stone jar, from the drawing-room of Clifton Hill House, stood beneath. There was no dressing-table in the room; a small cupboard was a sufficient substitute, and a little looking-glass in an Indian frame hung between the windows. Thus the room was fit for receiving any visitors.

Over the mantelpiece, which was crowded with ornaments and photographs, hung, in later years, the treasure that her brother Edward left her, an early painting by Burne-Jones of the Nativity, in three panels—surely one of the sweetest and best loved of his pictures. She enjoyed taking friends up to see it and share her enjoyment of its deep mysterious colours and the tender scenes, painted after the manner of the old Renaissance artists, several in one frame. The group in it which she loved best was one, half hidden, of the Blessed Virgin seeking shelter at the inn at Bethlehem, and the woman of the inn standing at the door wondering regretfully where room can be found for the Travellers.

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In her letters Mary often mentions her peaceful room, and the sights and sounds from its wide-open windows.

Feb. 22nd, 1891.—Such a very delicious Sunday afternoon of pure bright sunshine. I am sitting in my room, fire fluttering to itself behind me, crocuses wide open, and many clumps of hellebore nearly pink with warmth and middle age; heavenly bells chiming for afternoon service, like the Land of Beulah, and a thrush singing now and then, and little birds chirping and conversing. The air has a sharp tone in it, but it is invigorating and not rasping.

July 7th, 1903, Sunday.—Such a glorious peal of bells going on; all across Clifton comes the sound, mellowed, but with splendid reverberations of the tower, and that eager irregularity I like so much . . .

That was before morning service. Now the same blessed sound is going on before evening service, and such a lovely circle of green hills and shining houses lifting up their silent praise.

Mary always made friends with her servants; and she showed not only that she cared about their lives and interests, but valued their sympathy and co-operation in the deepest sense. To be out of touch with them was a real sorrow. In one New Year's entry in her private diary she wrote, thinking of her own needs :—

“I want much communion, prayer and learning of God, more energy of love and prayer for souls. It would be such a comfort if our servants cared more.”

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Maria Dinwiddy, once a cook in her house, relates how Miss Clifford gave her, one Christmas, "a photo of herself and a jar of ginger *as hot as cayenne pepper*, 'with her *warmest* Christmas greetings.'"

Her consideration for those who worked in her house showed itself in practical details, such as using the fewest possible plates and knives at a meal—so few as to arouse protests from other members of the family—in order to save the washing up; and she gave servants due credit for their part in creating the comfort of home life. The following letter was written to her brother during the influenza epidemic of 1892: some of the children had been ill, and she says:—

The nurse and cook are both in bed with influenza. Pop went away for a change on Tuesday after being in bed for over a fortnight. You can fancy what a time of it we had, and the climax arrived when poor Stanley [the man who cleaned the boots, ran errands, etc.] was ill and did not come. It was like the plagues of Egypt. I am so thankful that Margaret and Claire and Aunt Liz and our nice rather delicate little housemaid did not break down. Kind Louisa Newcombe [a friend and neighbour] went away, and lent us her most capable and willing general, and we are now very good and happy. *What* a blessing servants are. How I dislike getting up coal and washing up cups and dishes, and all the time seeing things untidy and muddled, and feeling my relations are staggering with fatigue. Well, we have much, *much* to be thankful for.

The old nurse, Eliza, and another old servant, Mary Legg, were family friends. A little "Old People's Home" at 15 Portland St., Kingsdown, was

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mainly established to give them a resting-place in their old age. Mary Legg had been Miss Hassell's servant, in her house in Portland Square in the days long, long before. "You remember our dear old Mary?" wrote Mary Clifford once to a friend—" *ringlets and proverbs*." That just described Mary Legg. She had something of the "Natural" in her, something that allied her to the old mediæval jesters. She was full of kindly philosophy and bits of Scripture ready for every occasion. She wrote entertaining letters and expressed her downright opinions freely, often entering into the family conversation while she was waiting at table. When, at the age of sixty, Mary Clifford failed (to her intense disappointment) to learn to ride the bicycle, Mary Legg wrote to a friend of the family :—

"I heard Miss Clifford speak at St. Matthew's School. She has a wonderful talent for speaking. She serves her generation well, and deserves a carriage given her by all the citizens to ride in, not a bicycle to run the risk of her valuable life.

"Best wishes from your humble friend,

"MARY LEGG."

Mary Clifford was on friendly terms, too, with those outside her home with whom she came in contact—postmen, tradesmen, shop-assistants, road-menders, railwaymen and many others. She had a smiling-and-bowing acquaintance with more than she could name. In time, there was scarcely a gathering of people in any part of Bristol where there would not be found one or more who claimed her as a personal friend.

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This account of Mary in her home shall end with a letter linking together in one bond of affection her family and her friends and that wider circle where official relationships were transfigured by homely, human fellowship. It is written on the day after her fiftieth birthday to her sister Agnes, who had gone in 1887 to live in Ireland, making her home with her friend Miss Maud Scarbrough in her country house at Bettystown near Drogheda. Edward Clifford had come to Bristol, as he always did for Mary's birthdays; and her jubilee present from her family was an interleaved Bible in four volumes (her own choice); but her part on this birthday was as much giving as receiving.

REDLAND GREEN,

September 9th, 1892.

MY AGNES,—It really was an uncommon birthday, Jubilee indeed. Anthony and Neddy greeted me first, A. incoherent and joyful.

Neddy and I were going to Church and met, on the stairs, a beautiful sort of round banner, with floral and leaf inscriptions, from Portland Street. Miss Lavan had been up making it since 4 o'clock, and though she deprecated praise, she *felt*, dear soul, that it *could* not be more beautiful. . . .

After Church, back to breakfast; the mantelpiece and table glorious with flowers, and my "Pleasants" arranged, so grand all round. My four holy and beautiful Bibles best of all; and Anthony's wee green pin-pillow and John's needle book (made by themselves), and Gwen and Polly's pair of green bags, plimmed out with pin-cushions for Lily [*i.e.* for Miss Lily Trotter to give to the Arabs in her missionary work], and Mary Legg's glass dish, and

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Ted's lace shoulder fall, and his box of expensive sweets and his tin match-box of Chinese tea at £5 for 1 lb., and his photograph in addition to his share of the Bibles, and L. Newcombe's tomatoes, *and all my letters*, and Constance's tea for Mary Legg and her presents for each of the children. My letters were delightful. Then we had broiled mushrooms and coffee, and then a hymn and prayers.

About 11 we went per fly and legs to 26 Somerset Street (Ted and I calling on the Portland Street old people on the way: I had sent them a leg of lamb for dinner). Miss —— had cordially allowed us to come and see the dear old house, and we fairly fell in love with it. Ted and Margie had not been there for forty-three years. The day, you know, was made of sunshine with the bluest sky. Certainly those rooms have a peculiar charm; large bay-windows and such a view of life, and yet so quiet: the nursery and each bedroom and the curl of the bannister where Neddy broke his arm at four years old. Then outside, the little stone terrace and sloping garden with the weeping ash, and the two pumps and the grass plat. And the neighbouring garden and place where the Pope was burnt in effigy, and ugly Dove Street behind.

Then we adjourned to No. 8 where Neddy and I were born, now empty, rent only £27, a small and unassuming house with also the wide wonderful view, taking in the Cathedral too.

Then back, Ted calling on Fanny Prideaux and Rebecca Brady, and the children going to view those enchanting holes in the wall of the corner house in Freemantle Square.

Then dinner and more letters and another parcel of toys for the children from Constance. *More* came at 2 o'clock. The postman *laughed*, and I

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gave him an apple. Blanche's beautiful and clever embroidered serge covering for my sofa came then, and (Constance again) an old engraving and photograph for me, and money for sweets for Barton Regis Workhouse from C.

So then I girded up myself and collected the children to go over and give them, and we had the Chinese tea to strengthen us first. It was unspeakably nasty, like a teetotal beverage that is an utter failure, but no one was ill. And so the four children and I hurried forth and brought 10 lbs. of sweets, and trained over to Barton Regis. Dear little John trembled and shook as the train came in, but said nothing, and Anthony thought a good deal of himself for not holding tight to anyone in the tunnel. Snuff from Constance was awaiting us at the Workhouse, and the four children gave the sweets and snuff out to the old men and women really very prettily and nicely, and John was decidedly plucky with the old women, for the snuff-taking ones are not unalarming, and he went in quite alone. Mr. Dodge said he should give them all special tea, which I hear he did.

We then came home to tea, and had a very sweet, resting family evening, Neddy reading us nice bits of many kinds, and I went to sleep for a little, being tired.

Dear letters from G.H.S. and Blanche, and several to several of us from Constance : from Aunt Halley, and my little Barton Regis girls, and *many* others. Indeed the love and kindness from above and beneath and on every side were truly sweet ; one seemed to find no end.

Your letter and a few others had come the day before and lent a flavour. Those Irish people are perfectly delightful. And then it was very grateful

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and comforting to think of Alfred and Amy setting sail that very day from Bombay.

And so farewell, my dearest Agnes. I think my four-fold Bible delightful, and you will write in it when you return.

Your loving,
M.

Mary spent many holidays in Italy with her artist brother, Edward Clifford. In 1897 he began to teach her to sketch, and from that time painting became for her a new opportunity for happiness and enriched all her leisure moments, until the years when illness held her hand. Her little sketches reveal her keen sense of colour and of the spirit that lives in natural beauty for those that have eyes to see. The green edge of a mysterious wood, or a smiling cornfield against a blue sea, or a group of wild flowers in the foreground of a wide green field (reminiscent of the embroidery of her youthful days) were the kind of subject she most enjoyed.

The following letter was written on a tour through South Germany on the way to Italy :—

To the Right Rev. Alfred Clifford, Bishop of Lucknow.

ROTHENBURG OB DER TAULER,
BAVARIA, May 20th, 1896.

MY DEAREST ALFRED,—This is a most fascinating place, out of the beaten track, an old free city of the Middle Ages, walled and towered. We came yesterday, expecting to exhaust the interest in three or four hours, but are staying on till to-morrow, unwilling to tear ourselves away. The houses red-roofed, roofs high, with little windows, like Nuremburg; churches fine; the whole place pressed within its

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walls and full of historic interest. Four or five kings and emperors have stayed in the houses ; many sieges have been resisted. The people are proud of their old citizens—Nusch, who drank thirteen bottles of wine at one draught to save the citizens' lives, and Topler who after devoting himself to the good of the town, died in a dungeon. . . . The fountains and bits of sculpture are full of charm. The people simple and friendly. Two dear little girls ran up and shook hands, and how pleased they are when one says, "Ich bin von England."

I went to the Hospital and Poor House and was kindly welcomed. The former, nursed by nice deaconesses, struck me as a really good country hospital in a most venerable building. The Poor House for old people is also most venerable, and has hugger-mugger arrangements in which any poor old people would delight. Each has his or her own little room and own little shabby bit of furniture, but they have a common kitchen and food is provided. They were having "bread soup" for dinner, a simple preparation. These old Poor Houses are often dedicated to the Holy Ghost, and have a church close by. I saw one at Nuremburg too.

But the present loveliness of Rothenburg is all these beautiful old houses and towers with the apple trees in perfect blossom. The town is girdled with orchards, and the gardens have them. Ted has done a sweet picture of them with the walls and towers behind. Altogether the place has been a rare treat. Don't forget it if you are ever in Bavaria and within reach.

We went for a walk in the middle of this letter, round the walls outside, and I tumbled down and hurt my foot, and have had a deaconess and a kind English girl in the house to nurse it. It is much

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better this morning, but I am keeping it up. The deaconess arrived with bandages, etc., and a Bible in her bag. They seem a beneficent and very Christian community, just what we want to have for our Workhouse attendants. They were not only nursing, but cooking and washing in the two Poor Houses I have seen—so cheery and sensible and simple. I wish the Y.W. would get up a branch. These come from Augsburg.

We go on to Munich this afternoon. Darling old Neddy is the most sweet travelling companion. The perfection of his character comes out wonderfully. He is never hurried or put out and thinks of everything. He enjoys the pictures of course enthusiastically. I *can't* follow him in a good deal of his enjoyment, and certainly derived far more pleasure from the lovely windows in St. Lawrence at Nuremberg than from all the Veroneses and Titians and Tintorets combined. I feel quite deficient as to the Correggios—the want of serious feeling annoys me unreasonably. The Dürers are just the opposite, but are rarely *beautiful*, though so earnest and full of thought. His plants are lovely, of course, and a painted jay's wing was simply exquisite.

The thing that surprised us was to find the Lutheran Churches with all the old statues. You scarcely see any difference between them and the R.C. except in the service, which has apparently *nothing* in common. The destruction of images apparently did not reach this part of Germany. The old sculptures are nearly always in good preservation, while in the churches (and sometimes outside) are great crucifixes and pictures with R.C. Bishops and everything much as it was, except no images for adoration of Virgin and Saints, and no screens or altar rails. There is sometimes a little rather mean wood-work,

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benches, etc., but otherwise an evident valuing of the beautiful churches. You sometimes see Luther's portrait, but only rarely.

Altogether my impression of the people is very favourable. They seem to be a simple, industrious, devout people, less worldly and less earthy than the corresponding English. And certainly they don't seem to have any wish to fight us, whatever the Berlin people may think.

Your loving,
M. C.

In the autumn of 1896 Mary visited India, staying with her brother Alfred, then Bishop of Lucknow, and Mrs. Clifford, at their house in Allahabad; and from thence travelling to many places of historical, religious, or personal interest. It was the year of the great Indian famine, and this inevitably saddened the memories of the tour. At Allahabad Mary energetically worked at making and distributing clothes for the famine people.

Before she left India she paid a visit to that part of Bengal where her brother and sister had worked and where Margaret had been married. Edward Clifford had also been there during his journey which took him to Father Damien's Leper Settlement at Molokai. Mary's letter describing this visit is given here for its picture of her in the midst of the Indian women and children, for whom she cared as sincerely as she did for the English people among whom she is best remembered.

To Margaret Williams.

BOLLOPHPUR,
Jan. 27th, 1897.

Sitting in verandah of your bedroom, looking at river.

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MY DARLING MARGARET,—Can you quite believe it? Here I am in the dear place. You can imagine the drive from Chapra through the wide flat plain (green here and there even now) along that road of deep dust and ruts and holes, meeting bullock carts and parties of people journeying with bundles; and once Miss Adams and two Bible-women—their tents half a mile off—a pleasant meeting; and she pointed out Mrs. Ghosh and three others far away going to a tree-hidden village—just four small white figures moving swiftly. Then through two villages (in one the Catechist came out and inquired for the “Boro Clifford,” *i.e.* Edward), then through a long bowery road—plantains—palms—trees—and through flocks of cattle and goats, and people who were your flock, till we turned to the left and drove straight up to this dear little house—far more lovable and pretty than I had expected: first farmyard; second, kitchen garden; third, grass, once your garden; and a kind welcome from Mrs. Charlton and Mrs. Butler. Instantly Koilash [the Indian padre] appeared coming from his house. I went out to meet him and he began to run. Then we sat down and talked, and he took me out and showed me Harry’s mangoes and the wells and the nests in the cocoanut palm. Then we had breakfast and prayers, and afterwards Kanto the bearer came, eager and beaming. He too is valued, and goes about with the superintending missionary. He began by being your wood-cutter. Then an old woman, Krithatha, Hori’s aunt, came. Now, Mrs. Butler has taken me to the School, where the head man and the two women all remembered you lovingly, and the children (dear little Bengali faces) sang “Jai Probhu Jesu” and “Jesu Nam,” though they seem rather supplanted by more recent

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hymns. I gave Koilash three rupees for a treat for them.

At 3.30 the church bell rang. This was for the women to come and see me—Koilash's arrangement. Into the church they came flocking, seventy or eighty, and numbers of children, who trotted about more or less. Harry's Memorial Cross is just at the west end outside. It was very moving to see all these women gathered, and I told them your message of warmest love and how you remembered them and desired that their children might be good and their husbands happy, and told them about our children, and that John was like his father. We sang three hymns, your two favourites and another, and then I gave Mrs. Charlton's invitation to any who wanted to ask questions to come to the verandah, and I think they *all* came, and there was a great business of getting mats. They were eager to send you their names and some sent messages. I have noted down all I could. Ockoi's mother is a sweet old thing. She and Onno go about together to the villages teaching, with the C.E.Z. ladies. They were the last to go, after quite an hour and a half. They want you to "come once with your son, that they may see you." Anugraha the ayah looks very blind. I gave her your message. She looks sad. Ockoi's mother has lost two children. She was *glad* because it was God's will, but she knows it will give you sorrow. The women think of Gwen as Phulmoni, and I am now known as "Phulmoni's Aunt." One very poor woman has gone off to another village to try to get some *gur* for Phulmoni. It is very pretty how they say *not* "I loved Mrs. Williams," but "Mrs. Williams loved me very much."

The Ratnapur orphans arrived in a boat, and we have just been watching them go—a very pretty

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sight, the late ones getting in by way of the water and creeping round the boat roof.

From "The Old Maid Book," written on her next birthday after her return from India :—

Sept. 8th, 1897.—No New Year's entry, as I was in India. A memorable year, extremely enriching.

Personally my gratitude to God is unspeakable for His perfect perservation of my dear ones and my work during that dreaded absence, which He has caused to be a wonderful enrichment to me. I long to see India as it is now, green and fruitful beyond other years, after the strange Sabbath-keeping of the famine. And I would gladly go and help to gather the other harvest.

Here I sit in dear Aunt Lizzie's room, the rain pattering on the wych-elm leaves, and the brown clock ticking on the mantelpiece. It has been such a nice birthday. . . .

I don't feel a bit older, tho' I am 55, and yet in a way more seriously settled; much less ambitious, for one sees what things are settled and not likely, and one cares less to work for good opinion, tho' bad opinion would be quite as bad to bear.

This room and its great quietness is a true means of grace. I am finishing with immense interest the Church Congress paper on Women's Foreign Mission Work, and the National Union one on How to face the pain of the world.

This world of wonder and of opportunity is rushing by very fast. Lord, may I daily enter into Thy mind about all things—not assert myself but listen to Thee.

[There follows a long list of new friends met during the year.]

CHAPTER VIII

YEARS OF WORK

My life flows on in endless song ;
Above earth's lamentation
I catch the sweet though far-off hymn
That hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing ;
It finds an echo in my soul—
How can I keep from singing ?

F. J. HARTLEY.

AFTER Mary Clifford became a Poor Law Guardian and began to be known in a wider circle her work increased rapidly. The willingness of her service and the influence of her personality made her to be valued as a public speaker and as a member of committees and councils. To her, such occasions were no mere dull formalities, trying though the work might often be: they were, rather, opportunities for wider human intercourse and for fellowship in the warfare of good against evil. Her presence at conferences and meetings invariably called forth a spirit of comradeship and enthusiasm for high and pure aims, and one after another who met her over official interests found themselves accepting her generous friendship and sympathy. "I think it is very good and sweet to go on making friends as one gets into middle life," she wrote once to Miss

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Mason: "one has tides of youth." One of her "tides of youth" came with this widening of her interests and responsibilities. It would seem that the very sight of her drew people to love and trust her, and many were the new friendships that enriched her life.

When she was a girl she felt her absorbing interest in her friends to be a danger. "I live in them, which is not right," she wrote in her "Old Maid Book." But with the growing consecration of her life her love became more and more selfless. She really entered into the lives and interests of other people. There is an entry in her "Old Maid Book," of an earlier date, but showing characteristically how deep this went: it is written on the last day of the year when her brother Edward visited Palestine (1871):—

"Several gifts I thank for. Edward's visit to Palestine which has given me a feeling of possession in the Holy Land. His going is really better for me than going myself, purer, less disturbed, more complete. My soul really feels as if it has been there and knew the places."

If Mary was rich in friends, this richness of imaginative sympathy was one of the things which made her friendship so precious.

Several of the letters already quoted, telling of her Poor Law work, were written to Miss Blanche Pigott, who herself was a Guardian on the Erpingham Board (Norfolk). Her long and close friendship with Mary Clifford began in 1885, when they met in the rescue work of a great London Church Mission in connection with St. Peter's, Eaton Square, when

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Canon Body was the missionary. For very many years, until the time when Mary could no longer write, there were seldom many days without letters passing between them, and these letters make a record of Mary's work and interests to the end of her working days.

"I have a remembrance," Miss Pigott writes, "of driving with her in the dark from the East End of London in old Lady Ashburton's carriage, after I had been taking the great mission service for Mr. Charrington and Edward Clifford at the Assembly Hall, Mile End Road, where Lady Victoria and Sir Fowell Buxton had come to take the chair for me. But I was too tired to remember much except that she (Mary) had a most sweet and beautiful voice. I had long heard of her from Lily Trotter, who had met her in Switzerland, and who spoke of her as very superior and clever, with rather a different outlook from our own, and gave rather an impression of awe.

"It was the first morning of the Mission, and all the rescue workers assembled to receive orders from Lady Tavistock, who was head of this part of the work. When I came in I saw a vacant chair beside a lovely-looking, gracious lady, with white hair and beautiful complexion, whom I at once recognised as Lily's friend, and sat down beside her. From that moment, through long years, our love only grew and deepened, and my life was enriched by the most encompassing tenderness and almost motherly care. 'The wholesome strength of Thy right hand' always seemed to me to describe her. Her brother Bishop Clifford wrote to me since she left us, 'Fill

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me, Radiancy Divine ' ¹ is the line I have always associated with her.'

"At one of the midnight gatherings during that Mission a poor wild, painted girl said to me, looking at a certain worker, ' I don't know about *her*, but '—turning to dear Mary—' I know that old lady is good.' Her pure white hair made her think Mary old.

"One thing she said to me during the London Mission had a most liberating effect. I had got rather a cramped feeling that one must give up outward things and only seek the highest. Lady Tavistock had given me a large very pretty photograph of herself, and I was tempted to buy a frame that I thought suited it, and afterwards was afraid I ought not to have wasted the money on it. I told Mary, and I never forgot the tone of her voice as she said, '*Wrong*, to spend money on beauty and friends!' or some such exclamation of astonished disagreement. It was a delightful liberation for me, and how I thank God for the beauty and light that fills my rooms now. On her first visit here she looked at my rooms and said, 'You have not enough pictures yet,' and gave me Millet's '*Angelus*' to add to my store.

"She came here at least once before my dear mother left us, and I treasure a picture in my mind of their walking together in the garden to look at my special border—Mary walking very slowly to suit the dear mother, who leant on her arm, and held her stick on the other side ; Mary walking very upright,

¹ This line is from Wesley's morning hymn, "Christ, Whose Glory fills the skies," Mary's favourite hymn at family prayers.

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with her hands folded calmly before her, the air blowing about the lace of her soft white cap, and the sun lighting up her lovely, gentle face and green dress, which matched the colour of the lawn over which they strolled. Evidently she was telling something amusing to the mother, for I heard their happy laughter. My mother and friend always kept their child's heart."

Mary was nearly fifty when she began to take part in the work of what was then known as the National Union of Women Workers (now the National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland), but she entered it with all the enjoyment and enthusiasm of youth.

She was personally in touch with the early origins of the N.U.W.W. through her friendship with Mrs. Thomas Pease, Mrs. Edward Goodeve and Miss Gertrude Savill, who, with other well-known Bristol ladies, formed an Association for the Care of Friendless Girls in 1879. Miss Emily Janes, Secretary of the N.U.W.W. from its beginning, writes, "It was 'the Bristol plan' as carried on in that city which Ellice Hopkins, with whom I worked from 1882 to 1888, adapted and preached effectively through the length and breadth of the land. Some hundred and twenty of these Associations had been started, and these provided a nucleus for conferences of women from 1889 onwards."

These conferences were the earliest opportunities for the gathering together of women of all parties and interests for the purpose of careful discussion and exchange of experience in all matters wherein

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women shared public responsibility. Party politics and differences of creed were avoided, and educational, industrial and moral questions were the subjects of most of the meetings.

Two letters of Mary's exist, describing the early conferences at Birmingham and at Bristol. They reveal, all unconsciously, the secret of the love and confidence she inspired: her eyes were open and quick to appreciate all that was of value and beauty in the work and character of the women she met.

N.U.W.W. Birmingham Conference.

2 HILLSIDE, REDLAND GREEN,
Nov. 16th, 1890.

The Conference is just over. It has been very stimulating. As a good and perfect thing of the kind it would rank with the first Broadlands Conference—not like it in its immediate aim, but like it from a peaceful and pure and heavenly air prevailing. Miss Stacey (the Birmingham Secretary) told us, that first evening at her house, that she had had numbers of letters before from people wanting to come and talk about their own little plans and theories and hobbies, but none of them seem to have come, for one of the two things that chiefly struck me was the absence of self-assertion. Everyone was taken up with earnestness over the work in hand, and there was so little display. And the other thing was the real and beautiful tenderness for each other: the love of God seemed so to be underlying everywhere and warming and sustaining that there was not, throughout the whole, a single jar. The Dissenters were, I thought, particularly heavenly in this respect. We met in the Friends' Meeting House (some 400 generally present, all women). Notwithstanding

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this, the tone was on the whole, one felt, rather Churchy, and I think it's very sweet of the Non. Cons. to endure with entire meekness the unconscious attitude of superiority that Church people take. At the same time, it seemed to be a proof that they recognised the value of our ways and our stand. The fellowship was very heavenly—the way people one did not know began to talk eagerly about what was in their minds and again and again came up saying, "I *must* shake hands with you."

Miss Stacey *had* worked hard to get it all into form. She had a private secretary and even a shorthand writer at one time to dictate letters to, but by the time we arrived the dear woman was at leisure and the arrangements were quite perfect—such hospitality to so many—delegates from E. W. N. & S., everything provided and no hurry or vexation of spirit. Her guests, besides me, were Ellice Hopkins' friend Miss Emily Janes who interested me very much, Mrs. Morse, widow of dear Mr. Morse of Nottingham, and a Miss Shirley who also turned out interesting. *John Inglesant* was written in Miss Stacey's house. She knows the Shorthouses well.

The first evening we just dined and talked. The Prayer Meeting next morning was nice as a beginning. Far the best thing that day was Miss Wingfield Digby's speech. She looked such a dear and lovely person.

[Here a page is missing from the letter.]

[What Miss Steer] said about her many matrons and assistants stirred me up a great deal to do more to draw on those I know. She praised hers warmly, and said she spent more time on each of them individually than on any of the girls and children themselves.

It seems a pity that Miss Steer should go about

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so much to get money for her Homes, but it must be very stirring always to hear her.

I forgot Mrs. Maclagan's very moving little speech about Mothers and Daughters. Her paper was read on the last morning. She and Mrs. Creighton, what grand people they both are. All that "Mother's Union" subject is full of interest. Mrs. Creighton, who is from Worcester, is, Miss Hopkins thinks, the best woman speaker in England. I don't know about that, but she has a really splendid clear look in her face and a strength and a quick penetrating sword-cut about her; when she is near you also see how very *beautiful* her face is. Mrs. Maclagan was truly fine and noble and a Mother in Israel.

The wind-up was dear old Miss Cobbe. She came in late, looking nearly as broad as she is high, with everything against her, you would think. But everyone rejoiced to see her and gave her a hearty welcome which pleased her, and oh, how she warmed up and spoke, just on love to souls—or people—in love to God. She broke down crying twice and made us laugh in between. She was full of fire and everyone was kindled.

That was practically the end. Numbers of people had spoken of course—Miss Lidgett, Mrs. Lyttelton; I spoke two or three times; nice little Miss Donkin, and many others.

It did seem so splendid to have such a camp of good, earnest, gifted people and to know that they were only representing thousands of others.

I did various other things, some valuable things in the Poor Law line; and on Friday Mrs. Morse said, "I'm going to see the Burne-Jones windows at St. Philip's Church. I have never been there since I was married." And we went—a great classical-architecture church with very large windows. Oh,

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such a blaze of glory, such divine crimson in grand cloud-like masses: the figures large and full of meaning and of beauty. One is glad to remember those windows.

Bristol and Clifton Conference, 1892.

To Edward Clifford.

2 HILL SIDE, REDLAND GREEN,
Sunday, 13th Nov., 1892,
10.10 a.m.

MY DARLING NEDDY,—This is the first moment I have felt free to sit down and write to you.

There is but one feeling—that we have had a unique and most wonderful and delightful week. One after another comes or writes full of delight. Certainly God has given us continual help. The meetings have been full of help: not all of equal interest, but some of pre-eminent interest. The best discussion was on Wednesday morning. Miss Sewell's paper was A1 on "the conditions of effectual work among the Poor" (who ever wrote the article in *The Times* of yesterday must have missed that meeting, which was the best of all). Miss Bromby and Constance [Cholmeley] and Mrs. Hugh Price Hughes and Mrs. Gilmour, and many others, followed it out *well*. Many people thought the Duchess of Bedford's paper the best thing we had. It was a real kind gift for it to be so, as a paper read for an absent person is often so flat, but the people (more than 1,000 I should think present) took up every point and laughed and applauded in the right places. It is a paper of much beauty, full of points and most appropriate to present requirements. She wished me to read it if Lady Aberdeen did not come. . . .

But to me the person I *enjoyed* most was our dear

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H. W. S. [Mrs. Pearsall Smith], who was fairly splendid. I had expected the Valedictory Meeting to go so flat with the Duchess and Lady Aberdeen not there, the latter we only knew at the last would not come, and we could not fill her place.

But Lady Battersea, who came (with Miss Morgan of Brecon) to almost everything and always sat on the platform, returned thanks quite beautifully as a visitor, and was so very capital about it (taking such trouble to find out what to say), and then H. W. S. seconded it in a rarely charming speech carrying everyone by storm—ending by, "I didn't know women were such splendid things," which set everybody off, of course.

Blanche Pigott spoke very beautifully twice, helping several people very much. Constance is still here; she spoke exquisitely.

I can't tell you how delightful everyone's spirit has been. Not one cross or worried look, no one putting herself forward or twaddling. And such a real Christ-like tone, a very Christian tone. All sorts of people so entirely enjoying . . .

I should say that the most important effect of the Conference will be to raise the standard of work. A great deal of valuable light has been given in every direction that was examined into. I should not wonder if we began a register of inspection of private Homes, so as to help the managers to give those who send cases a real knowledge of the character of the Homes.

Also we shall, I hope, get a local *information* centre in time probably. And I think we shall go more than ever before into individual cases, with more patience and skill.

Of course, it has drawn people together in a wonderful way. The nearly 300 delegates of all

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kinds of views, billeted on people here, must extend sympathy.

Lady Laura Ridding was as always so very nice. She had been with Alfred at the Thorntons the night before. C. & I dined with her at the Pigous.

Much love,

YR. M.

One of the tangible results of this Conference at Bristol was the development of the Bristol Civic League, which has since grown into a large organisation with centres in different parts of the city, and does indispensable work for the relief of those in distress through sickness, unemployment and other misfortunes. Miss A. Deane, O.B.E., was the first Secretary, and like many others, drew inspiration for her life of service from her personal contact with Mary Clifford.

"I had just left school," she says, "where I had been an ardent student of economics longing to plunge into the work of the world, when I first met Miss Clifford.

"The joyous thing about my first personal contact with her was that she asked me to *do* something; she asked me to act as steward at the Council of the National Union of Women Workers who were holding their meeting at Bristol for the first time. It brought me at once into touch with the women who were then pioneering all the women's questions of the day.

"I remember so well the glow of pleasure it gave me and the wonderful inspiration it was to be used by her, during the days of the Conference, to help in

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all sorts of ways. Her voice, her charm of manner and her delicious dress appealed to me, but much more than this the feeling she seemed able to convey to me about the work that I was wanted to do. I had no hesitation in going to her from that time onwards about the opportunities for service which opened out before me. . . .

“The *real* power of her influence in my life was the encouragement to ‘go on and *do*’ and her assurance that wisdom and strength would come, and that I should be helped by the only true Source of all strength.”

“It was at Nottingham in 1895,” Miss Janes writes, “that the Central Conference Council grew into a ‘National Union of Women Workers of Great Britain and Ireland,’ largely owing to the exertions of Mrs. Creighton and of Lady Laura Ridding. All societies, nationally organised or of national importance, were invited to send representatives to this Council. A little later, in 1897, the Council of the N.U.W.W. was invited to enter into federation with the ‘International Council of Women’ so intimately associated with the work of Lady Aberdeen, and this became part of a world-wide movement ‘for the application of the Golden Rule to Society, Custom and Law.’ In all these successive changes Miss Clifford took a full share of work and of responsibility, attending Executive and Council Meetings, taking the chair on many occasions, reading papers, and joining in discussions on many questions, but chiefly on those in which she had expert knowledge.”

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She was elected President of the Union in 1904, and again in 1905.

Of her position and influence in the Union Lady Laura Ridding has written the following recollections :

"From 1889 to 1895, in the earliest days of the National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland, when it bore the name of Central Conference Council and was tentatively making its way as a new experiment, I believe that it was to Miss Clifford (although she was but one of a group of twelve pioneers) that we owed the winning of the confidence of the religious world in respect of this undertaking.

"She inspired our first recruits with a firm belief in the value of a movement of which she was one of the leaders. The vivid impression made by her radiant presence on various groups of women workers, gathered from different parts of England, strangers to one another and strangers to her, was most remarkable.

"She was beautiful and restful to look upon ; her voice rang out musically ; and her words revealed her big outlook, her wide experience, her motherly desire to help all who needed help, and her shining wisdom and holiness. It was this rare combination of qualities which made so many followers of our new movement determine, in the words of Barak to Deborah, that under Miss Clifford's leadership they would be safe in moving forward : ' If thou wilt go with me, then I will go.'

"Her position in our Union was unique, on account of her power as an inspirer of confidence. Through the twenty-five years which not only saw the process

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of growth of the Central Conference Council into the National Union of Women Workers, but also the acceptance by the Government and the Nation of the organisation as the representation of the best women's work in the United Kingdom, she retained her influence and helped our members to preserve a sane outlook, sense of proportion, and religious spirit in their various lines of work.

"I believe that this remarkable influence owed much of its strength to her wide outlook. Unlike many reformers and philanthropists, she wove her life on a wide loom with threads of many colours into a pattern of brave size. The loom stood in a quiet Bristol house, but its threads were gathered from all quarters of the world. As the sister of a brother, the artist friend of Father Damien, and of another brother, a missionary bishop, her outlook on life could not be home-bound, for her horizon stretched to the Pacific Islands in the west and to India in the east; and as a Christian, who longed fervently for the coming of her Master's kingdom, she fought His battles, and watched its progress in every part of the globe. Persecuted Armenians, the oppressed Church in Wales, White Slave victims, suffering invalids, helpless Poor Law children, unhappy, downtrodden lives all appealed to her sympathy with unbearable intensity.¹ She wore herself out in their service.

¹ The evils of the Opium Traffic and the cruelty of the trade in Birds' Feathers may be added to this list. About most of these questions she took practical steps to influence public opinion, either by organising meetings in her own or her friends' houses, or by collecting money and distributing information.

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"How characteristic it was of her that the most beautiful address ever given by her should bear the name: '*The Pain of the World: How to face it.*' She delivered it at the Conference of the National Union of Women Workers at Croydon in 1897. 'Perhaps we all in this room,' she said, 'feel that we have had a terrible time of pain in the world during the last two years. Armenia, Turkey, Greece and India have gone through anguish which we have realised as no sufferings can have been realised before.'

"The same pity for distant suffering showed itself in the valedictory address given by her at the Women Workers' Conference at Cheltenham six years later: 'If Christians pulled together, where would be the evils we have faced this week? If the Christian powers were united, should we now be standing round and looking on in Macedonia and Armenia? Would the Mahommedan world be still unwon, untouched, contemptuous? We can each of us begin to mend this . . . We want the forthcoming spirit, not more for abroad than at home.'

"The last words quoted above show how her broad encompassing motherhood had nothing in common with the outlook of the cosmopolitan, of that repellant type of mind which despises all humble service, and considers no subject worth its consideration while it is not concerned with international questions and problems. To Miss Clifford no appeal, no duty was negligible. She took the same conscientious trouble over the selection of a suitable foster-mother for a group of boarded-out pauper children as over the decision on the adoption of a policy concerning the international advocacy of

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Women's Suffrage. 'To us it seems the first necessity to be ready, both in mind and body, to do God's Will,' she declared once ; and it was that sense of spiritual service which taught her that no discrimination could be drawn as to importance or non-importance between the various duties which He called her to perform. She was always troubled when she encountered opposition to that spiritual sense, when the religious aspect of questions under consideration was disregarded.

"She was always a confessor, always a witness with a wonderfully winning power.

" 'It was companionship with God or comradeship with man which gave conquering joy to the early Church.' This was her belief, and her whole life testified to its truth.

"I well remember some of her inspiring, pungent sayings with which she braced the minds of her hearers. May I give one or two below? They were all uttered at Conferences of our National Union of Women Workers.

" On Self Control.

" 'It is not ourselves who are to control ourselves, but God Himself Whom we are to put in that central place of power.'

" 'Discipline means the trained eye and the trained hand ; and ultimately freedom.'

" 'The peace of self-control leaves room for leisure of soul in which things good and beautiful come into being and grow like plants in a garden.'

" On the Pain of the World : How to face it.

" 'Now, as we sit alone, absorbed in these awful sorrows and wrongs, to children and ignorant men

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and women, to innocent animals, tortured preventably and unpreventably for centuries—what do we see? I see a door open in heaven, and out of it comes Christ and He enters and sits down with us. That is just what happened, and what has comforted me when all other comforts for the time failed. Into this world of sorrow and mystery Christ came.'

" 'The Law of Sacrifice, the law by which the sting of evil may be taken from pain, making it a sacred and even a beautiful thing—according to this law, all life is won through suffering. . . . By this law the strong serves the weak, the greater yields its life for the less. It is clear that in the Government of the world pain is on the side of deliverance.'

" *Advice to Women Workers.*

" 'God has not only given us our eyes, but also our eyelids.'

" 'An openly dictatorial *manner* we can see is sometimes checked by a smile; but a managing *spirit* is less accessible; though perhaps Mrs. Hominy would not have walked up the room in a procession of one, if she had realised how delightfully we should have been amused with it ever since.'

" 'We who sat at her feet and listened to her words of wisdom believe that Miss Clifford's most lasting influence will survive in the blessed contagion of spiritual idealism, spread by her among her larger circle, through dark, perplexing and terrible years by her witness of Serene Hope, Courage, and absolute Faith in the Love and Justice of God.'

To those who knew Mary Clifford such passages as these just quoted from her public addresses reveal

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her personality. Her words as well as her actions were so completely in accord with her whole life. Her mind and her motives were clear like crystal and were never obscured by the muddiness of conventionality. The sparkles of humour were not on the surface, they were part of the nature of her mind, like the light within the crystal. So we find her speaking of serious, solid subjects with a refreshingly light touch.

“Don’t you think that [Secondary Education and Rural Housing] the two subjects we have faced to-day, are waging a battle with that arch-enemy dullness? Who can doubt that dullness more than any other cause accounts for both gambling and intemperance? A spurious interest is substituted for a real interest, God is left out and life becomes cheap and commonplace. Do you recall Bunyan’s list of women who were bad company? There was Mrs. Batseye and Mrs. Inconsiderate, and there was also ‘one young woman and her name was Dull.’ Don’t you think she probably took to drink? Don’t you think her boys took to betting and gambling? Did she not, whether poor or rich, sink low? Dullness is not a weakness, it is a fiend—a real sin. No one has a right to be dull. Life is divinely given, and it is worth living.”

The absurdity of mistaken fanaticism was not lost on her, even though it were shown in a cause with which she sympathised.

“We dislike the way,” she said once, “in which some women’s journals run down men *as* men. Were men to speak in the same way of us we should be lost in surprise!”

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"It is, no doubt, a trial," she said, "especially to women (I confess to it myself), to hear both sides and consider them fairly; but we must endure it, and try to enjoy it."

Now and then, in passages from her printed addresses, one can read between the lines and discover something of the story of her own inward effort:—

"You see," she wrote, "the thing is to have an aptitude for liking persons in detail; an instinct that reminds us that other people are as important to themselves as we are to ourselves; that they have a right to as interesting a life in its own way as we have. If we cheapen other people by assuming that they are not interesting, we help to make them dull. The best conversationalist I ever knew was a well-known literary man who had the delightful art of being warmly interested in what his companion for the time was saying. Contact with him was electric, and made one emit ideas. It is the infinite caring of God, realised, that awakens the hidden springs of our being, and makes every moment worth living.

"Now because this faculty in its exercise takes a great deal out of you, and is sometimes exhausting, I want you to be really in love with it. You must understand why it is so badly needed; why the supply runs so short. You will not believe in the amount of comfort and help that result from it till you have been at work for ten or twenty years."¹

"The days of service for individuals," she said

¹ *Quarterly Paper of the Guild of SS. Paul and Silas*, October, 1899.

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in another place, "will surely never be over. For we ought to grow in the capacity of taking interest in other people, and in having something akin to affection for the souls we want to serve. The quality of devotion in work has never been a very common one, but it is a most fragrant quality and it has a boundless efficacy. It is a sad thing to be too busy to think of our fellows' needs individually. If we had eyes to see, we should know that each soul is as unique as a sunrise. . . .

"To give in order to save ourselves pain is a form of self-indulgence. We cannot exterminate pain, but we can share it."¹

Work undertaken in this spirit was often exhausting, and at the same time these years of her life were extremely full. Her intense personal interests combined with her sense of national responsibility made tremendous demands on her energies. Passages such as the following, from her letters to Miss Pigott, are merely representative of many, showing the unsparing way in which she gave herself to help wherever she felt the need.

1894.—I feel a little emerging from my sea of business. The Armenian collection [of which she was Treasurer] is nearly £500. They are sending £200 per week to Van, and had £1,000 in hand yesterday. Then I have completed with immense toil the complete annual list of the Workhouse School children, or rather, corrected the Master's list. And now I must address myself to my short paper for the Central Conference [of Poor Law Guardians] on Weak-minded Paupers (or some such title). I

¹ *Presidential Address N.U.W.W. Conference, Birmingham, 1905.*

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took six meetings for Armenia, and several other things are going on also, but now, D.G., I feel through and am thankful.

1894, *Feb. 6th*.—I have three papers on hand, which will be done by next week : a great deal on my mind about individual cases of poor people ; a G.F.S. Candidates' meetings ; the Teachers ; and several other things, besides the daily crop of letters. The subjects of my papers are, one for the *Y.W.C.A. Gazette* on influencing younger girls—Mrs. Menzies asks for it ; one on the duties of Women Guardians, to help the coming election, for the *Birmingham Magazine* ; and one about the new Act *re* Control of Children by the Guardians.

(She was keenly interested in the organisation of a monthly social gathering of Elementary School Teachers, a branch of the Y.W.C.A. in Bristol. "Teachers are very near my heart," she wrote once, "and have been ever since I was twenty-four.")

1897.—I feel Armenia still more on my mind even than the Indian famine, and yet hardly any money is coming in. . . . It seems to me a great national sin that we should have (in 1878) undertaken to protect them and then have let things come to this. God grant that we may see what to do now, and do it. How intensely critical things are in Greece and Crete.

1897, *June 7th*.—I am getting ready my evidence for next week's Local Government Board Conference.

Also, we must make a big crusade about Birds' Feathers. Did you see Mr. Hudson's letter and the article in *The Times* ?

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1897, *Feb.*—I have just come in from a specially long Board day, and done household accounts, which don't quite balance—they never do, alas !

In 1898 the Bristol Unions were amalgamated, and one Board of Guardians instead of two was made responsible for the Poor Law administration of the city. The standard of personal care in the work, which Mary Clifford had set herself when she became a Guardian, became more and more difficult to put into practice.

1898, *March 18th.* (*To Miss Pigott*)—"I suppose you are getting up in years, but I hope you are smart and well as myself," as one of my Canadian young men wrote to me this week. I am excessively weary, however. The prospect of having to provide for six hundred extra people, owing to the amalgamation of Unions, is serious, and I earnestly pray we may do nothing ill-judged. . . . You see we are responsible for two Workhouses and for people in a third. Everything goes rather well, except out-relief. Seven hundred people have to be given to at present, far too many. . . . Other things so pretty well and quite hopefully.

Sept., 1898.—The sixth committee this week-end—this one three hours, and one's brain is fairly used up.

Jan., 1899.—I have declined five invitations to go away to speak in the last two or three weeks—Truro, Bolton, Ipswich, Liverpool, Cardiff—feeling I ought to be here: just now one ought not to be absent on Board days.

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April 30th, 1900.—Committees are thicker than ever. It's rather a trial. I suppose it's the age of Committees in my life, like the glacial period in geology, and I trust it will pass into something more fertile.

Some social life was sandwiched in among all the hard work :—

June, 1901.—On Saturday I go to Edward for two days, for two meetings. He has invited three Duchesses to dine one of the days. I rather quail, and am having new sleeves put into my old gown to meet them.

June 30th, 1901.—On Friday the Vice-Chairman of the Board resigned. . . . I can't think who they will elect, as I fear they will reject Mr. Sheppard¹ who is so good. I am feeling a good deal more prayer is needed for all our work. Such an element of hopelessness comes in without it: with it, all is gathered in and safe.

July 6th.—Such a good thing happened yesterday, we elected Sheppard to the Vice-Chair. I proposed him and it was carried by a small majority. The other side mismanaged their cause absurdly, saying that no working man must be in the Chair, and that made the Board angry.

Sept., 1902. Ponsworthy. (On a Holiday.)—This has been a good time for reviewing work. I want to do more for the Workhouse Nurses.

Jan., 1903.—Work here is rather beset with difficulties. I should like a good strong interested

¹ Alderman Frank Sheppard, Lord Mayor of Bristol 1916-1917.

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man to consult with, and feel what a comfort a really satisfactory marriage must be.

At the Conference of the N.U.W.W. at York in 1904 Mary received a new inspiration for the service of her own city. At one of the meetings at York the question of beautifying towns had been discussed, and she came home filled with ambitions for Bristol, whose mediæval picturesqueness she loved while she deplored the dismal monotony of some of its more modern quarters. She worked hard with Professor George Hare Leonard in the formation of an influential association, which was given the name of the Bristol Kyrle Society, its objects being the same as those of the London Society named after John Kyrle, "the Man of Ross." There is not room here to tell of the activities of the Society and its efforts and successes in preserving the natural and architectural beauties of the city of Bristol. Dr. Beddoe was the first President, and Mary became President on his death in 1912. For thirteen years the valued and energetic secretary was Miss Lilian P. Wills (Mrs. Wynne Willson), who before this had acted for a while as Mary's private secretary, helping her with her large correspondence. ("I have got a dear little secretary, for love only," she wrote to a friend.)

In the background of all her hard work there was illness in Mary's family, often causing her intense anxiety. But no depression or worry showed itself in her manner. She was, as ever, full of enjoyment, interest, and high spirits. Professor Leonard once recalled to her a sentence in an address she had given

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at the Broad Plain House (Social Settlement in Bristol)—“Can we not be a little gay?” “Yes,” she replied when she was reminded of this, “I think we ought to be so very much *obliged* to those who are cheerful.”

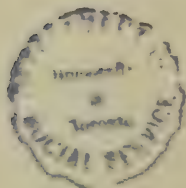
“One’s value for things increases as one gets older,” she wrote in 1900, “and one’s sense of beauty; I do thank God for that.” Of her sketching, which was her favourite recreation in the midst of all the tedious work, she wrote to Miss Pigott, who also painted, “I can’t tell you how I enjoy my poor little bits of painting. It seems to bring me *into* enjoyment.” “Have you got the lovable Antwerp blue, the delightful purple madder, and the magnificent aurora yellow?”

“Do you get nice refreshing laughs?” she asked her friend, “I hope so.” “Don’t rush about so. Say no, and be a little grumpy, it’s right in the end.”

The following are also from letters to Miss Pigott, who had been very ill:—

“I suppose you will accept comparative rest for a time. I know well how one feels the shortness of the time and the need of doing. Still, we can trust our Lord about it. We know the value and importance of a healthy mind, and if possible, body, for work, and they do so go together; and as we get middle-aged—into what Edward calls ‘our Michaelmas-daisy time’—we have learnt not to be in a hurry. Beloved, what a sense of leisure one sometimes has when there are hours before one and no interruptions. That is like God’s view. He will have His blessed way.”

“Indeed, I do feel very keenly about the things



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one seems not able to do, as well as the things one forgets, and so on. But as you say, one does believe the Merciful Creator and Faithful (I love that name of His) will make up for our omissions. Our Lord's kindness on earth was so generous and indulgent. . . . I feel life is so full of good and blessed things. 'My cup runneth over.' "

She wrote this prayer in one of her letters :—

"Lord, grant we may never fall short of any work Thou hast prepared for us to walk in, and that we may not be burdened by the weight of work Thou hast not given us to do ; and anyway, take our omissions and neglects, and may they be put right in Christ. Thou knowest all our desire."

Mary thoroughly enjoyed her strenuous life. Her powers of intellect and judgment were being used to the full ; and she was very happy in the friendship and sympathy of her fellow-workers.

"We have met to cheer one another on," she said in her address on being elected President of the National Union of Women Workers (Cheltenham, 1903), "to share the burden of responsibility, to realise that we are comrades, to face new questions together. To me, personally, these meetings are delightful ; they are, more than most things in my experience, a foretaste of the intercourse we shall have in the greater life beyond."

When in 1904 the International Council of Women met in Berlin, under the Presidency of Lady Aberdeen, Mary Clifford was there as President of the British National Council of Women. She spoke on "Women in the Civil Law," and "The Unmarried Mother and her Child," and also took part in several

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debates. She had dreaded the event exceedingly : there was illness in her household ; she would be away from home at the time of the longed-for return of her brother and his wife from India ; and above all she feared the secular spirit of the foreign Women's Unions, believing from the bottom of her heart that nothing but spiritual guidance could safeguard such a gathering from mistaken policies and personal jars. The expense, too, was a serious difficulty in her way : but by the generous hospitality of Mrs. Alfred Booth she was enabled to make the journey, and she found the Conference full of interest.

"It was the most curious gathering that ever I was at," she wrote on her return ; but she also said, "I had a most delightful and unexpected welcome from the audience, which assured me that as English persons there was no prejudice against us, and the affection of some of the German ladies knew no bounds. All that was very pleasant. One got lots of very nice interesting talks with most of the ladies, or a great many of them, and their earnestness and desire to hear were, one felt, most touching."

When the German Empress held a reception for the Presidents of the various National Societies assembled in Berlin, Great Britain and her Colonies were at first, by a strange mischance, omitted from the invitation. No doubt it was owing to the fact that the President of the International Congress was British and was supposed to represent Great Britain. Nevertheless the omission caused great searchings of heart and not a little indignation. But the English leaders were determined that ill-feeling should not be allowed, and the mistake was quickly rectified. Doubtless Mary's influence had

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its share in soothing the irritation. "When you get up to speak," one of the Australian ladies said to her, "we all feel we are going to be quieted."

The following description of the Reception is from one of her home letters :—

HOTEL SAXONIA,
June 14th, 1904.

It is 10.30 p.m. and this is the first minute I have had to write. Am just in from a late drive—very amusing—with Lady Battersea about Berlin. "Better than sitting in the Hotel," said our coachman, a jocosse creature-of-the-woods person.

The morning was taken up with the Audience with the Empress. I only got my "command" last night. It was evidently a misunderstanding and not intentional that we were left out. Canada, New Zealand, and Australia all got invitations. The seventeen Presidents of the seventeen countries all went to the Palace at 11.30. We were shown into a great Reception-room, empty and stately, and then ladies-in-waiting and ushers arranged us in order, in a great semi-circle. I had gone with Mrs. Sewall [the American President] and Miss Susan B. Anthony, who said, No, *she* would never curtsy to anyone. She is a *fine* old lady of eighty-four and probably *could* not curtsy. We all looked very nice in our best clothes. (I wore lovely lace and my new black silk.)

In came the Empress with one or two more of her suite. Lady Aberdeen, who stood first, curtsied and kissed her hand. Well, the Empress came to each one of us, and talked to each of us for three or four minutes, and asked us questions showing she exactly understood what to say. She asked me about the

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Women's Colleges, Newnham, Somerville, etc., wanted to know whether the girls went to lectures. We each in turn curtsied and kissed her hand; she shook hands twice with me. Miss Anthony she was very nice to. I don't think Miss A. curtsied, but I heard them both laughing heartily, and wondered why. Miss A. was telling her about the Suffrage, and then said, in her strong American way, "Now you must go and tell your husband all about this. He's a vurry diligent man and we don't care, if he takes up the Women's question, if he's called Emperor of America." The Empress made her sit down and was as nice as possible. The Americans and all the rest, however republican, were simply charmed with her. I had heard she was not clever, but the way she adapted herself and entered into each one's interests was really very sweet, and I should not have liked to miss it at all."

On this occasion, as always, distinctions of rank and nationality could not interfere with Mary's direct human touch. She never forgot the impression made by the German Empress, and often spoke of her with sorrow and sympathy during the war.

In these years when she travelled up and down the length and breadth of England, and even into Scotland and Ireland, Mary Clifford became widely known as a speaker, and was everywhere welcome. She always made careful notes when preparing an address, and held them in her hand while she spoke. But the effect of her speaking was extremely natural and unstudied. Often there was an unpremeditated gleam of humour, when she would look up over her glasses and tell some amusing little story, more for the sake of getting into touch with her listeners

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than because it was a particularly apt illustration of her subject.

Among the innumerable meetings in which she took part there was one which she remembered with peculiar pleasure, and this was in her own city. In 1903 the Church Congress met in Bristol, and the Bishop (Dr. Forrest Browne) asked her to speak at a mass meeting for women. Here she was among those who knew and loved her ; very many present must have felt they were listening to a personal friend. The great Colston Hall, which holds between three and four thousand people, was filled to overflowing with women from every part of the city, many were turned away ; and when Mary Clifford came on the platform, all the great audience rose up to greet her with an ovation that showed their love and admiration and even their pride. Was she not their own Miss Clifford, and had she not been known in their streets and in their homes for sixty years, bringing beauty and gladness with her ? And was not the name by which they loved to call her, " The Guardian Angel of Bristol " ?

It was a meeting for mothers, mostly working mothers, and she talked to them about motherhood and home. Her voice, not powerful, but very clear, reached to the farthest corners of the building. The address was one of the simplest and homeliest she ever gave, but there are many who remember to this day the things she said and the effect of her words. The subject was the relation of children to mothers, and for part of the time she personated a little fourteen-year-old daughter, and told the mothers exactly what she needed of them. With her

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usual directness and insight she went to the root of the matter, and made all who heard her feel the need in a home of justice, sympathy, and the strength that comes from discipline. And the foundation of all, she asked them to remember, lay in the words, "Whose I am, and Whom I serve"—"Not anything less than that will do."

"You mothers," she said at the end, "have an opportunity which the angels might envy."

In that meeting there was a warmer fellowship than in any other she had known. When she spoke of it afterwards—and that was but seldom—it was with a note of surprise in her voice, not untouched by awe, as she recalled the love and reverence which had rushed to meet her from the hearts of so many known and unknown friends.

CHAPTER IX

"A HEART AT LEISURE FROM ITSELF"

It is the poured-out life that God blesses ; the life that heeds not itself if only other souls may be won. "Ask, and it shall be given you" is one of God's nursery lessons to His children. "Give, and it shall be given unto you" comes farther on.—*Parables of the Cross*, by LILIAS TROTTER.

SURELY our distracted world stands in need of the vision which had been given to Mary Clifford, and we are all thirsting for the Living Well from which she drank. In the midst of the material and the commonplace she knew that nothing but ignorance and sin could make things "common and unclean"; she knew that "that which God doth touch and own," be it never so dull in our eyes, is in reality beautiful and holy. The truth of the Incarnation, of "God manifest in the flesh," underlay her every thought. A friend wrote to her when she had given up most of her active work, questioning whether it were not better to have no part in the responsible affairs of the world, but in the more retired walks of life give one's mind wholly to what is spiritual and eternal. She replied:—

It seems to me you have taken too heavy a burden upon yourself—for such it must be to think the people of God are to see the world suffer and abstain from trying to help. Do you not think the term *world* has several meanings and relationships? *e.g.*

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"Love not the world" must have a different significance to "God so loved the world." Does not that mean every living creature? and, as *their* habitation, the useful and the beautiful world of nature which we use, and bless Him for, and which is more or less essential to our existence. But always primarily the souls He has redeemed, He would not that *any* should perish.

Well, then, may we not gratefully and with devotion serve His creatures? I see no essential difference between being a nurse or a baker or a policeman, and being a magistrate or a guardian or a doctor or a member of Parliament. I mean, of course, according to our sex and capacity and so on. Each in our vocation and ministry, which ought to be marked, like the bells in the Temple, "Holiness to the Lord."

If we leave all these offices to those who do not know Him, surely godless laws and education—moral neglect—must poison the air of the country. One sees every day what follows where God is forgotten. We have such varying duties, but I feel I have to pray a great deal for our country and for the Government and public things. (St. James tells us to do so.)

To her the whole of life was sacramental—meals, social intercourse, nature, art, government, and the ordinary daily household duties—all had a spiritual significance: and she learnt through her own study and thought and prayer to value deeply sacramental religion and worship. On week-days as well as Sundays, when there was opportunity, she was at the quiet early Communion service at a near Church, though she was sometimes the only one present.

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“I always go to Holy Communion at 7.30 on Thursday mornings,” she wrote in 1905 to Miss Pigott. “To my surprise the bell at Redland Green began at 8 on my birthday morning, Friday, so I slipped over. You know in the calendar it is the birthday of the Blessed Virgin (Sept. 8th), and the Vicar has begun to have service. Nice for me.”

“How seldom our services are joyful enough,” she wrote once; for joy and fellowship, in communion with God and in the communion of saints in heaven and earth, were what she sought and found in worship.

Though all who came in contact with her at once felt, consciously or unconsciously, the spiritual atmosphere in which she lived, she was reticent of speaking of religious things in general company, unless she felt for some clear reason called upon to do so. But with anyone who was spiritually in sympathy no one could be more natural and unreserved. Her niece Mary Williams wrote of her: “Don’t you think one of her characteristics was her lack of reserve? Aunt Mamie comes along and takes my hand with a peacefully enjoying expression and says, ‘Look, my Polly, at the heavens declaring the glory of God.’ How few people could say a thing like that just because they feel it. She didn’t keep her beautiful jewels shut away in boxes, but wore them for people to see, and let people see *her* enjoyment of them. And I think a lot of her friends were the same.”

There were others of the younger generation who found an old-fashioned religious atmosphere stifling, and to whom the religious talk of their elders (and

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bettors) too often seemed a convention from which life had fled, a shackle that must be broken. One of them in the course of a conversation said, "You didn't feel that with Miss Clifford. One would not have minded *her* talking about those things."

It was surely a sense of Mary's sincerity and humility which made such a remark possible.

If she was anxious about anyone's spiritual health, she hesitated to speak. Sometimes, rather than speak, she would let the opportunity go by, and then write, a way of approach which was less personal, and which left the one written to greater independence of thought and decision. It was in this way that the two following letters came to be written :—

Aug. 20th, 1906.

I am not sure that you weren't out, but have missed you during the week here at Holy Communion. I once had a bad time of gloom and darkness, and it makes me very sad for anybody who may be like that ; things not seeming real. Well, I want to tell you that the one thing to do is to live—spiritually—in the place of blessing, to be faithfully in obedience, and to exercise the faculties that lay hold of the unseen, eternal things. Leaving off means of grace means the muscles of one's soul getting weak from want of exercise. Realise how the power and usefulness of one's life spring from the Divine current of life, and our consciousness is not the necessary condition of its coming. Our *will* being right is of great consequence. A definite abiding surrender of oneself to Him and deliberate obedience to His will is a condition. One wants to turn wholly to the light. I *know* one's will becomes a very different thing as to power, with exercise and steadfastness.

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"Pour into our hearts such love toward Thee, that loving Thee above all things we may obtain Thy gracious promises . . ." That is the *end*, not the beginning. Love comes generally long after faithfulness. You see, I know about the darkness, and that it departs after a time ; a sad time, of course. but I would not now have been without it . . .

In the train to Yatton, Sept. 20th, 1906.

. . . One has to realise as a matter of experience that it matters supremely in judging of a spiritual fact to be oneself in a spiritual atmosphere, *e.g.* if anyone read the Bible in only a historical condition of mind they would not perceive the spiritual relations of the events. I am not thinking of any theory about miracles. We know so little and have so much to learn. Of course, we must wish to have an open mind as to science. But I should expect to come to a mistaken conclusion unless I was cultivating the devotional part of my mind. It seems to me one must keep that much in view. One would desire to be able to look at things from the Divine standpoint. No doubt it is only by really using the Word of God as food for our souls that we understand its power : one must give it a leisure space even if only a short one as to time. You remember the story about Ruskin. Someone was looking at a Turner with him and said, "How I wish I ever could see such a sunset." Ruskin only replied, "Don't you wish you *could*." He knew the person was practically incapable. I do solemnly believe a person may lose their spiritual perceptions by not using them. We can't get into the unseen, spiritual world unless the ways of access are kept open by prayer and listening to God's voice, by

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communion with Him and real study of what He says.

One isn't at home in any subject (even like mathematics) unless one lives in it; *e.g.* mathematics is a blank to me. It is wonderful how light comes as one prays about things—light what to think, what to do—and that, in proportion to the clearness of the spiritual atmosphere—that is of the conscience and will being free and pure, and one's soul's muscles, so to speak, in good condition.

On Biblical Criticism.

Oct. 15th, 1906.

You say, Is it of much use to read New Testament constructive criticism? Yes, surely. When one has a deep down desire to know *what* God has for certain told, it has been a great joy to me to see the foundations, *i.e.* to understand better the particular kind of weight revelation has. It makes a great difference in the way one receives the narratives of the four Gospels whether they are a reliable account given by eye-witnesses, and St. John is infinitely more interesting when we know that his account is the way *he* saw and knew our Lord, and not gained from tradition and a philosophical mind.

When her eldest niece was about to go to college she found this letter, which must have cost much time and thought and prayer, left in her room for her, and no further word on the subject would her aunt have spoken to her uninvited:—

Feb. 20th, 1905.

I am writing you a letter because then you can think over my thoughts in a leisurely way.

First of all—I think I was wrong in saying that

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if you go to Newnham you would have to make a stand. Because the real thing is, that you will need to be living very much in the light of the Presence of God, and then you will be and do the right thing whatever that is. You will, if you go, probably find Newnham very secular and critical, and the atmosphere not propitious for spiritual life. . . . I should like you, if you go, to go very much in God's strength, so that that other atmosphere won't influence you. It is so absolutely a fact that He that is with us is stronger than He that is against us, if only His Spirit is the governing force.

One of the things we have a good deal in our power is our spiritual habits. When I was about seventeen, Ellen Whitty gave me a little book called *The Still Hour*. It had a great effect on me. It gave some account of the lives and power of prayer of some saintly people who seemed to see a door opened into heaven and to really know God. The book taught that one ought to get an undisturbed hour for prayer and study every day, at any rate to aim at it. Later I read Bishop Wilkinson's *Aids to the Devotional Life*, where much the same habit is spoken of. But the chief point is not the particular length of time, which must vary in different lives, but the getting a real sight and touch of God Himself daily, and the *having a definite plan*, deliberately made and steadily aimed at. I say aimed at, because it is a life-long struggle to get it. One fails again and again but one doesn't give up. Aunt Constance's grip and control of her life has always been such a help to me. Some people let circumstances control them. They are weak. We must decide what our duty is and do it. What makes for power and peace is to see, after prayer and thought, what is God's will in the matter. (He is above all you know *reasonable*

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and understands our limitations. He knows what the demands of our life are, and what we really can and ought to do.)

Obedience is the key. Habits are the stuff our lives are made of. No success is equal to the success of a mind braced and controlled by the highest purpose.

The help of the regular time of perfect undisturbed quietness is, as you know, unspeakable. It is a solvent of doubts and fears. There may be times of terrible darkness and loneliness, but they will pass if we are mentally faithful and obedient.

Personally I can only get that bit early. It must be when one is not tired out, but the thing must be decided by oneself. One must not be driven before the wind. I feel great apprehension at you or any girl I love going to a place like Newnham unless you have formed these spiritual habits. We—you and I—who do love Christ and mean to serve Him, are His representatives, and of course He wants us to go out and make it easier for people to understand Him and His way of looking at things. It's a splendid responsibility, and we must not fall short. But we do need this habit of intercourse to be developed in us, and to make it our ideal and plan.

Your loving,

M. C.

Three or four more extracts from Mary's letters shall be given. They are written to the younger generation and are very homely, but through their perfect naturalness shines the peace and charity—the golden autumn light—of a long life of work and experience.

“A HEART AT LEISURE FROM ITSELF”

To Mary Williams (then in India).

BRISTOL,

April 19th, 1905.

MY DARLING LITTLE POLLY,—This is to give you my dearest love on your coming of age birthday, such a good and memorable day. I hope you will have the Whitsunday Collect gift, it is such a good one—a right judgment in all things. It is not just a gift by itself but a *fruit* of other gifts, a fruit of righteousness, self-restraint, quietness of heart and mind, unselfishness, wide interest and knowledge and good sense—and sympathy. I think you will grow a great deal in this year, having to think and serve so much. I find I’ve grown in my year and a half of being President of the N.U.W.W. Sometimes I feel like T—— M—— when she said, “I like having little children under me”—though they are not little children and they are not under me. So there is a difference. I am, however, in a sense at the head of them and feel very proud of them. They behave so beautifully and have such an *AI* spirit of caring for the highest and are never small and personal, and also are very good and affectionate to me. I must give it up in November for various reasons, but I am so glad to have been through it. . . .

Next week I hope to go to Ireland to Aunt Agnes and Aunt Maud [Miss Scarbrough] for a fortnight’s HOLIDAY. Ha! it will be nice, and I’ve got a new block and some new paints and I hope to enjoy myself. First, jointly with Miss Soulsby, giving lectures to the Alexandra College students in Dublin. . . .

Your loving,

Useful Ant,

M. C.

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To Mary Williams (same year).

. . . So much illness is about. I got a letter to say our old Mrs. — was very ill, and went yesterday to see her. She was very much put out with her daughter for telling me, as she said I had plenty of other people's troubles without bothering about hers. She always calls Grandfather "The Master" and is like one of the family, so grumpy and affectionate, and I think a really good Christian. 'Yes,' she said, "it *is* good to do all the good one can. As I was coming home from work the other night—you know where I live now it costs 2d. to come home by the tram instead of 1d.—I was walking along and I suppose I looked tired. And there was a poor man standing by, oh, such a poor working man. And he took a penny out of his pocket and held it out to me. So I said, 'Oh, no, thank you, I don't want it.' But he said, 'Oh, you'd better take it.' And I said, 'No, my son, thank you all the same, but I don't want it.' And he said, 'God bless you, mother.'"

Wasn't it rather nice? She did her good that time by merely being an occasion of the man doing his. She was rather funny about deceit. She ordered her daughter to say she was seventy when she was really seventy-four, for fear of losing her work, and ended by saying to her daughter, "Now don't 'ee say anything different, or they'll think I've been deceivin' of em." Quaint morality and no sense of it's being wrong.

Then as I wended home through the Old Market, a woman ran after me, in a beautiful crimson velvet hat and a scarlet bodice. "Oh, Miss Clifford, I must speak to you. Do you know who I am?" "Well, what *is* your name? I thought I knew you."

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"Mrs. Darcy. You was my friend in the Barton Regis Union, and my husband's come back, and we've a nice little home, and we're members of Christ Church, and you was always my friend in the Barton Regis Union." And there stood the husband, who said, "It was all the drink, and I've given it up for years and I'm a teetotaler." Nice, wasn't it?

Your loving,

M. C.

To John Williams, who with his brother Anthony was at school at Marlborough.

BRISTOL,

Feb. 3rd, 1906.

Many grateful thanks for your letter and Anthony's . . . I am pursuing my way among the Unemployed. Poor things. Don't be unemployed, my J. and my A. Turn your hands to anything, I beg, but do one thing *well*. A clergyman and a doctor [the vocations chosen by her nephews] must do dozens of things well, and each one thing supremely well.

I called on one man (*re* emigration) yesterday, a bill-poster, as thin as a lamp-post; a nice frank man, looking old from troubles. After a long talk *re* his poor depressing troubles he cheered up and said, "I'm a bit of a *painter*." (I supposed of railings.) He went to a cupboard and produced a jam-pot on which, behold, a human face—a very plain man. I marvelled at its sticking firmly on that slippery jam-pot. "Is it a likeness?" I asked. "No, it's just out of my head, but my friends all

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say, if the hair were not so black it would be just like me."

They come to tea to-morrow.

Your Ant,
M. C.

Six days after the date of this letter Mary was telegraphed for to come at once to her brother Edward, who was ill. She arrived at his house in Kensington Square to find that he had been seized with violent pain about the heart, and the doctor only gave him a few hours to live. He recovered, but Mary cancelled all her engagements and stayed in London to nurse him. The circumstances of the attack were just such as would increase the shock of it to Mary, who was always exceedingly nervous about illness, for her brother had been alone when he was taken ill and it was a considerable time before help reached him. At the same time there befell one of those incidents which, although of a piece with the whole fabric of her life, yet gave more sensibly than at ordinary times the feeling of being upborne by angels' hands.

Her friend Mrs. Cholmeley shall tell the story in her own words.

"I had been that morning," she says, "to the S.P.G. house with my nephew Frank and his father and mother for a Dismissal Service on his going to missionary work in South Africa. When we came out his mother said to me, 'Now we will all go home and have lunch.' 'No, dear,' I said, 'I cannot come because I must go at once to Mary Clifford; she wants me.' 'But how can you go to her?"

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She is in Bristol.’ ‘No, I am certain she is at Kensington Square, and there is something the matter.’ When I arrived Mary opened the door and said, ‘You’ve *come*. You got my telegram then?’ But I had left home early and seen no telegram. I was certain then and have never doubted since that Mary’s angel was permitted to fetch me. She was alone, and the doctor had just been, and said he scarcely thought Edward would live half an hour.”

To those who knew her, the pain she suffered in her brother’s illness is best measured by her silence regarding it. A friend of the family who had known them from childhood remarked: “If anything pleasant happens in the Clifford family you are sure to hear all about it; but if anything goes wrong there is silence.” She wrote the bare facts, as reassuringly as possible, to her brother in India, but other intimate letters at this time contain no word of the anguish she had been passing through. It was not only that on principle she held it right not to talk unnecessarily of sad things, “lest our gloom should darken the light by which others have to live,” but when she suffered it was sometimes more than she could bear to let the wound be seen. Very often throughout her life must she have given sympathy where the depth of it was never known. One of her nieces remembers a little incident which revealed much to her. She was at that time liable to attacks of rather severe neuralgia, and during one of these her aunt suddenly said to her, with a look of inexpressible grief, “My darling, I *can’t bear* that you should have to suffer like this. I have had so little illness and pain myself.” The niece, used

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to the bracing sympathy by which her aunt always encouraged the conquest over pain rather than any giving way to self-pity, laughed off the matter awkwardly. She was surprised and taken aback by the intensity of the sympathy shown.

Her friend Miss Pigott wrote to her once in a time of keen disappointment. Mary answered:—

“Beloved, of course I should feel it a horrid trial . . . and I think it is one for you. But I am afraid sympathy would make it worse. Can you see, I could not bear it. . . . You know my heart’s sympathy is with you. I dare say I am wrong, for no doubt there are circumstances when one liked and was helped by expressed sympathy; but generally it comforts me most to know it is there, but unspoken, and to have the spoken part courage and good cheer, especially when it can take the form of appreciation of one’s beloveds.”

Edward Clifford’s illness was not the first nor the last of which the heaviest part of the burden fell upon Mary. In 1902 she had left her work and spent many weeks in Ireland nursing her sister Agnes, who had got blood-poisoning from a rat-bite. Minor illnesses of Edward’s had taken her to London from time to time, and for some years Margaret Williams’ health had been failing. Now, in 1906, she became rapidly worse: patiently and sorrowfully her quiet, faithful work was laid aside, and soon she herself was needing constant care and companionship in her growing weakness.

At this time Mary was still President of the National Union of Women Workers and on the Bristol Board of Guardians; she was a member of various

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Committees, and her daily correspondence was very great. In the summer of 1906 she added to all her other duties by undertaking, with the help of friends in London, the unwonted work of a sale at Edward Clifford's house in aid of Bishop Clifford's Indian diocese.

In the happiness and interest of her public work there was little outward evidence of the strain she was enduring at home: it arose even more from her life-long habit of taking all family responsibilities on her shoulders, and her extreme sensitiveness to others' suffering, than from the seriousness of the troubles that befell. Yet those who have had the care of a dear relation in sickness (and what woman has not known something of such an experience?) will best understand Mary's life at this time. Anxiety about Margaret and the sudden shock of Edward's illness took their heavy toll, and in the autumn of that year, 1906, her physical strength gave way.

Then followed three difficult years. Illness was a new experience to Mary. All her work had to be given up, as she was quite unable to cope with any, even the simplest and most familiar. Although still President, she was not present at the Conference of the National Union of Women Workers in the autumn; and after nearly twenty-five years as Poor Law Guardian, she did not seek re-election on the Board.

In all the restless, nervous depression under which she suffered she was still her own patient, controlled, considerate self; but her sense of duty and responsibility was strong, and it was a hard struggle to submit

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to the inaction and apparent uselessness. Most of the time was spent away from home in the restful, strengthening company of her dear friend Mrs. Cholmeley. She fought hard for recovery, probably harder than was even good for her, for she was always a fighter for self-mastery, and to one of her temperament a nervous illness must ever seem an insubordination rather than a misfortune of the flesh, at any rate till patient wisdom has taught submission.

"I think illness makes one humble in a way," she wrote to Miss Pigott. "One is such a poor creature without the joy of natural life. Without Christ it would be unbearable." And again, "The gift of drawing and sketching have not come back yet. I only just think I must wait upon God for His most gentle teaching, depending on Him, and praying for my beloveds." "I wish I was more alert and alive with the heavenly love. But He knows our desire." "I hope I am not losing all the lessons of this illness, but how unprofitable one feels. Our Lord knows."

But her own illness was not the greatest trial that came upon her. The following year, 1907, it was found that her brother Edward was suffering from a fatal illness. Mary was much with him during the last weeks, and she was at his home in Kensington Square when in September the end came.

She was not afraid of death, and it often seemed as though a great sorrow which threw her back upon God for help both strengthened and calmed her, even in the midst of her illness. But Edward's death made the first break in the family circle, and few people have loved their brothers and sisters with a greater

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intensity than did Mary. It was a long time before she could bring herself to speak his name.

Then there were sad illnesses among her friends, and at the beginning of the next year (1908) Agnes Clifford became very ill. In May she died of cancer. And before that year was ended Agnes' friend, Miss Maud Scarbrough, who for her love to Agnes had become almost as one of the family, died too from the same fell disease.

Mary's patience in her own illness began gradually to have its reward. She was able to take up a little work again, to visit at the Workhouse, and to help one and another in time of need, and she herself felt that this helped her recovery. One day, in January, 1909, while driving with Mrs. Cholmeley, she said that she would like to ask for the Church's prayers for healing, and they went, that same day, with her sister Claire and her niece Mary Williams to the Rev. H. B. Bromby, Vicar of All Saints', Clifton. In talking to them, he directed them to pray especially for wisdom and guidance for the doctors, and for a blessing on all the means that were used for her cure (she had tried so many with so little result), and he reminded them that we must not come in a presumptuous spirit, to dictate to God what the answer to our prayer should be ; but that an answer and a blessing would surely be given, according to the promise of God. Then he laid his hands on her, and they prayed together.

Shortly after this a dear friend of Mrs. Cholmeley's, Miss Jessie Brown, who had unusual skill in a particular kind of massage, came home from America. In the summer she joined Mary Clifford

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and Miss Cholmeley in North Cornwall, and gave Mary treatment. At that time, too, came news which was calculated more than anything else to raise her hope and her spirits: her brother Alfred, the Bishop of Lucknow, was about to retire and to come and live close to Mary's home as Vicar of Stoke Bishop Parish, near Bristol.

Mary came back from Cornwall restored to health. The change was like the clear shining after heavy storms. At home we said: "Aunt Mamie is making her jokes again, she is well!" Her letters are once more full of life and enjoyment.

For the next four years Mary's life went on peacefully and happily, albeit in a lower key than formerly. The only regular work which she took up again was the rescue work at the Workhouse. But she mixed again with her friends and former colleagues, and attended some of the Committees and Conferences of the National Council of Women.

She did quiet work in Bristol. One plan which she carried out was the making of a little garden in the small plot of ground beside Emmanuel Church in St. Philip's Marsh, a part of the city dismal with smoke and crowded houses, and with no green spot on which the eye might rest. For this she begged money and plants from her friends, and there she placed seats, and inscribed a little verse that had been a favourite of her father's when he was a little boy at Fulneck:—

In Thy garden here below
Water me that I may grow.
When all grace to me is given
Then transplant me, Lord, to Heaven.

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Mary's interest in Emmanuel Church came through her doctor and most kind and faithful friend, Miss Annie Cornall, M.D., whose father had been Vicar of that parish.

Several very pleasant holidays Mary spent with her sister Claire. During one of them in her late years they had the great happiness of visiting their friend Mrs. Sumner in Switzerland. Mary wrote to Miss Pigott from Ballaigues :—

Our dear G. H. S. had a beautiful welcome for us. Her height and erect bearing are just the same, and her dear eyes [she had lost her sight two years before] nearly, if not quite the same. We have been sitting out reading and talking as of old. I long for you to come. The place is very pretty ; charming view of the valley, and far, far away, the Bernese Alps. My room looks into the forest and is cool and quiet. Claire is very happy and enjoying.

There was a little life that was very closely linked with Mary's about this time. Barbara Vaughan was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Vaughan, and Mary was her Godmother ; “she held her at her christening,” Barbara's own mother says, “and was in every way a second mother to her.” There was a great exchange of letters between Barbara and her Godmother, and Mary's letters to and about her baby-friend show the deepening tenderness and sympathy of her heart as age brought her to the quieter and more leisured years which her brother Edward had called “our Michaelmas-daisy time.”

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To Barbara, aged 2.

BETTYSTOWN, DROGHEDA, IRELAND,
May 14th, 1905, Sunday afternoon.

MY DEAREST LITTLE BARBARA,

Here is a box of shells for you. Give my love and kisses to Janet and Brother-boy, and please let them have some if they would like. They are the houses of little sea people, and when they go out of the houses the waves wash them up on the strand here and give them to us. You three would just love this strand, a wide, wide, *wide* sandy beach, with little tame waves where a baby can paddle or call to the flocks of sea-swallows and sand-pipers as they go skimming by. Then you would go up into the sand-hills, which are covered with wee pansies, and have your dinner there in the sun, and the bunnies would creep over and peep at you. If indeed Bob was not with you. He is our great rough dog, very gentle and good but not a friend to bunnies. Oh, it's a nice place here.

And we have a wren's nest over the kitchen door with five eggs in it, and hundreds of birds who talk all day long. And two cats with long hair, one, Ruffles, rather old and very serious, sits in the window. Laddie, the other, who is marmalade colour, smiles more, and wherever he is if you just say, as mother would to you, "Would you like some warm milk?" he jumps up and comes running like a boy in a paper-chase for it.

Give my kisses to them all, my Barbara. I hope you are such a dear little girl, so kind and so obedient. God bless you.

Your loving Godmother,
MARY CLIFFORD.

There is also a surprise in the box.

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To Barbara with some little presents.

BRISTOL, October, 1905.

MY DARLING LITTLE BARBARA,

These are for your dolls to play with now the winter days are coming on. How are you all? My love to you.

Your loving Godmother,

MARY CLIFFORD.

To Barbara, aged 6.

BRISTOL, Nov. 7th, 1909

MY DARLING BARBARA,

I am so pleased to have your letter and the dragon. *Our* only dragon is Laddie, our dear long-furred yellow-brown cat. He is sitting up now in the chestnut-tree by the gate. He is good and gentle and a real gentleman, but he is perhaps the least wee bit jealous. A middle-sized black kitten came crying into the garden on Thursday as it could not remember where its friends lived. We took it in, and Laddie was awkward with it and sat under a chest of drawers. I should like him to be welcoming to strangers, especially if they are away from their friends. You children are *very welcoming*. I remember how you came to meet me at the station, and all stood smiling and sending out beams of affection to me as I sat in the little omnibus.

We also have a Boy Scout who comes and sits in our chestnut-tree. He does his lessons there—or did when the weather was warm—and carefully observes, as a Scout should, all that goes on in the road.

Give my love to Janet, Halford and David.

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I often think of you, my darling Barbara, and pray for you, and God answers the prayers I know.

Your loving Godmother,

MARY CLIFFORD.

Little Barbara and her elder sister fell seriously ill when Barbara was six years old. Mary's letters and gifts came very regularly to the children, and so also did her letters of comfort to their mother.

Feb. 6th, 1909.

MY DEAR, DEAR MADGE,

I can only stay by your side in prayer. *What a blessed little child.* Thank you for telling me so soon, and thank you for not telling me before the operation. [This was when Mary herself was ill and could hardly bear anxiety.] I am sending you dear A. L. Waring's hymns presently. She is just now I think dying, an old saint of eighty-five, who has loved and trusted all these years, and has been a stand-by to us all; and a little book of my own, wrung from me years ago by the pain of the world. And you *have* the four Gospels with our Lord's own "Be of good cheer," "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

I've been very tired this week, and won't write more now.

Your loving,

M. C.

Feb. 11th, 1909.

Only one word—You are continually in my heart and thoughts. I feel and know how much prayer is going up for you, and *is* being heard and answered.

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Patience seems to me such a hard lesson, and for my own part, having to have it makes me much more pitiful, especially for some of these poor girls I try to help.

P.S.—I shall be sending Barbara a book in the hope she may be able soon to look at pictures.

Mary, herself then near the end of her first long illness, "knew (as Mrs. Vaughan says) that those who 'watched' must not only tend the sick, they must tend themselves too; they must have that hardest form of courage and spare themselves." She wrote to Mrs. Vaughan:—

Feb. 13th, 1909.

MY BELOVED MADGE,

You know how you and the children and your husband are constantly in my thoughts. Prayer and love one *can* give. I have asked three of my dearest friends to do that, and comfort does come to me as well as to you. The 1st Chapter of 2nd Epistle to Corinthians has helped me, and is in the very tone of what you say.

Tell me when either Barbara or Janet is well enough to be interested in things coming by post. I love to think of Mrs. Green; ¹ no one could be so delightful. I wonder whether you can give your attention to reading? As a sort of rest to one's mind and a sedative, I have found some of Miss Yonge's books a real soothing rest. Her people are some of them quite dear friends of mine. But perhaps you can't read Miss Yonge. Anything exciting I can't do, in the way of reading, but her homelike *Daisy Chain*

¹ Mrs. T. H. Green, Mrs. Vaughan's aunt.

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people have often ministered to me when I was unable to read any deeper book.

My love to dear Mrs. Green.

Your loving,
M. C.

Of course, my Madge, I have said nothing of what I feel. You know how it is, and what it is to me, and one doesn't want it said. But I love you.

"Later (Barbara's mother says) when much perplexed by the multitude of friends' conflicting advice, and the strange different opinions of good doctors, and forms of treatment of what, deep in our hearts, we knew to be a hopeless case, I personally rather longed to let our poor child be, to try no further remedies, no further operation, I again wrote to Mary for counsel, and then she so wisely answered":—

I know what you say is true about the old way of accepting illness. On the other hand it was very hopeless, and one only tries remedies because of hope. Our Lord (it's rather curious, because after all there were many remedies prepared even then) was very understanding and pitiful to the woman who had been to so many doctors. He did heal her without a word having been spoken. I don't think your husband and you will go to any new doctor without deliberately committing it to God, and then one does feel great rest about it.

"Mary went down to the grave with us in thought and prayer,—prayer which, as she elsewhere says, is a personal presence. And after the end had come

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so peaceful and so serene, and guarded by good spirits, she wrote to us this letter ” :—

Sunday, Jan. 9th, 1910.

MY DEAR, DEAR MADGE,

It is very good of you and your husband to have both sent me such comforting, exquisite letters. I thought of the darling at early service to-day in “all the company of heaven.” Our Lord must love her very much, and I have never doubted but that He tells them about us, and lets them know what we like them to know, and to come to us at times.

It was rather sweet about “God giving her a good breakfast” [one of Barbara’s sayings] such a welcome and such tender care. Dear Madge, you must never write unless you are fresh enough to feel it refreshes you. I *always* understand. You must rest now.

My love to you all.

I wrote and thanked your husband for his beautiful letter.

Your loving,

M. C.

* * * * *

In May, 1911, Margaret Williams’s long years of helpless weakness ended and she found her rest. Her daughter Mary then felt free to follow her life-long desire to go to India for mission work. For Mary Clifford it meant the sorrow of another long parting, for paradoxical though it may seem, she felt separation no less because she realised spiritual union so fully. Earthly pain and spiritual knowledge were both quickened by love. But she wrote as follows to her niece Gwen Williams when it was

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proposed that Mary Williams should go to be trained :—

Our minds are very full of Polly's proposal. . . . You, my G., are of course the one on whom it would chiefly fall. . . . Polly will probably go abroad if she is trained, and I've long felt we must freely give her for that if her health will do. I could not bear to hinder her, and though it's a great gift for us to offer, one looks back and sees how poor our lives would be if we had not in the past given up Uncle Alfred and Mother. A thousand-fold of good things have been added to us.

If we are allowed to have the mind of Christ about the arranging of our lives, we can expect courage to carry it out.

In the autumn of 1911 Mary was at the Conference of the National Union of Women Workers at Glasgow, and the following year at Oxford. But meetings were now rather beyond her strength. She wrote from Oxford to Miss Pigott :—

"I missed the splendid meeting last night, to my regret, because I had been in the chair in the afternoon and was tired. I am sure as one gets older one has to give up things and be satisfied. One gets—I do—such lovely things in quietness. . . . I enjoyed the love of the people. It was very sweet and comforting."

She was greatly distressed at the action of the Militant Suffragists. Having been always an ardent advocate of Women's Suffrage, she regretted exceedingly the lowering of the tone in the women's movement by methods which aroused evil passions



Portrait by Lafayette.

1910

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and division even amongst those who cared most for the good of women. The Suffrage was a means and not an end: it was a weapon which might be used in the fight against moral evils, and to resort to what she felt to be immoral methods to get it undermined the whole position of women.

"If we are to educate the younger generation," she wrote to Lady Laura Ridding, then President of the N.U.W.W., "we have to be clear on the moral grounds—I do mourn over the lowering of our women's standard of what is right."

The N.U.W.W. contained women of all shades of opinion, anti-Suffragists as well as Suffragists. Mary Clifford was extremely anxious that the great body of women should hold together, even at the expense of losing the extremists. In a printed leaflet addressed to the Presidents of the local branches (November, 1912) she said:—

"The N.U.W.W. is, let us remember, the one and only platform where we women of all opinions can stand—all of us together—and listen to one another with open, patient minds, and learn to understand and therefore respect opposite points of view. . . . Cannot we still be patient with one another? May we continue to stand together, ready to fight our women's battles against the powers of ignorance and evil?"

"As an old Suffragist I entreat our members collectively and individually to do this. Let us remember that whatever else happens, the great, the supremely important struggle against evil things will go on and increase. How shall we win if we are found divided, weak, and out of patience with one another?"

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On October 17th, 1912, the new University of Bristol conferred on Mary Clifford an Honorary M.A. degree. She looked forward to the occasion with a good deal of nervousness, as it was thought that a disturbance would be made by the Militant Suffragists ; also at the last public meeting Mary had attended she had fainted from the heat, and she feared this might happen again. There was no little amusement among her friends at the thought of her in cap and gown : the square cap had a comic effect on her white hair, in the place of her usual distinctive bonnet. A compromise was arrived at, however, in the shape of a black lace mantilla, upon which the college cap looked slightly less peculiar. All went without a hitch, and Mary felt it to be an interesting and pleasing experience, and she was grateful to the University for the recognition which she liked to feel was given to women's public work as a whole, rather than to her own individually.

The following account of Mary in her home at this time is from Miss Lynda Grier, of Newnham College, Cambridge, who was frequently a guest in the house :—

“ To those who had heard of Mary Clifford as an eminent woman, prominent in public work, the knowledge of her as a home-maker and a hostess came as a revelation. No one cared more for a home, no one knew how to give so exquisite a welcome to a guest.

“ The house with its long rooms was filled with cherished possessions. The walls were covered

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with books in mellow bindings and with pictures loved for their beauty and associations. Harmony, so often aimed at by exclusion, was achieved by the fearless admission of countless goods, blended by unerring perception and by warm affection. It seemed that entrance was refused to nothing that could give pleasure, yet nothing seemed out of place.

"If room was found for innumerable and interesting objects in Mary Clifford's house, an even more all-embracing charity was extended to any human being who entered it. The most insignificant visitor, introduced by a younger member of the household, would find herself at once an honoured guest. More, she would be drawn straight into the family life and be made to feel that she had a very special place there. Had it not been for this she might have felt embarrassed by the delicate old-world courtesy shown to her. When visitors were expected it was almost impossible to persuade Miss Clifford not to be on the watch for them so that she might give them an immediate greeting. Sometimes, when her health was failing, she might be induced to go to her room with the idea of deferring her welcome until the next day, but as surely as they arrived she would emerge and express her gladness at their coming.

"She paid constant little attentions to her guests. She would produce all kinds of contrivances for their comfort; a favourite jug, a special cushion, a warm shawl would be brought from her room to theirs. Then she would make the tour of her room with them, showing all its treasures, telling of the people from whom or the moment at which she

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had received them. Finally, having loaded her guests with every courtesy, she seemed as though she could not let them go without a parting gift ; a book, a vase, some little thing for their use that she had made herself, perhaps even a choice of one of the pictures she had painted, and not yet parted with, would be offered the friend who was leaving. And cordial as her greeting had been, her parting would be yet warmer. Assurances of the pleasure she had had in the visit, hopes of its speedy repetition, the loving letter which invariably answered the guest's bread-and-butter note, all contributed to the sense of happiness with which many look back on the days spent under her roof.

"She practised the generosity of accepting as readily as that of giving, a generosity which immediately put people at their ease. Ease and a sense of complete freedom were characteristics of the house. Every bedroom was also a sitting-room, and anyone wishing to be alone retired to her own room. Consequently there was no fear of interrupting anyone who wished to be quiet. In the evening when the young people were chattering round the fire her entry meant that she was ready to join in the fun and add her wisdom to the discussion. And as her wisdom was greater than that of any, so was her gaiety more sparkling than that of the youngest present. I remember how on one such occasion she came in to find us telling tales of animal intelligence. Immediately she added one, saying reminiscently : ' I always like the tale of the dog who stole a pigeon from a pie and then, feeling that the pie did not look quite right, fetched his

master's sponge and tucked it in in the place of the pigeon.' Her nieces shrieked, 'Oh! Aunt Mamie, you never told us that tale before, have you just made it up?' to which she answered as she left the room that she had known it a long time, and was *always* thinking about it. It is difficult to recall the turns of her speech which at times put an almost mischievous playfulness into it and rendered it distinctive and vivacious. 'Would you care to read the *Spectator*? No one else wants it. I have seen it, and C. I assure you prefers it stale, in fact just a little high.' Or when a guest rejected an unnecessary extra plate at supper she would say approvingly: 'That's right; don't let G. overload you with superfluous plates, she loves to thrust large quantities of them on her guests. It is her idea of high life.' Even in the weariness of her later years flickers of the same playfulness would spring up at a chance provocation. For instance, a visitor came down prepared to push Miss Clifford's bath-chair, and was greeted by her saying, 'Dear ——, this is indeed an honour.' The guest naturally answered, 'Yes, it is indeed an honour for me.' The retort came like a flash: 'How *wrong* of you to turn my own pretty speeches against me like that.'

"Always she thought of others. Every person, even every animal coming by chance to her notice commanded her complete attention, her careful, loving consideration. A crying child separated from its family on the Downs would call forth her instant activities. A strayed kitten, even though it might be as she would say 'a singularly plain little cat,' might well have been flattered by

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the amount of intellect devoted to the problem of finding it a happy home. To her no thing and no person was unimportant. Part of the debt which many owe her is that they learnt from her example (precept she did not offer) something of the joy of considering, appreciating, and honouring all things that draw breath.

"Something should be said of the peace that enveloped her. In the trying last years trifles worried her and she was troubled by a great restlessness. Yet in spite of this anyone who entered the house recognised almost with awe the peace that possessed her soul. She would say : ' It is only my illness that makes me mind about these little things, I know they don't really matter,' and whenever great trials came she met them with the calm of perfect understanding. Death had no fears for her ; rather she welcomed it for herself and others as a uniting friend. Life alone held fears as sometimes dividing her by its distances of time and space from those she loved, as sometimes obscuring the Great Presence of which she was so conscious. Doubtless it was the sense of that Presence which gave the feeling of peace to all who came in contact with her. In some measure she brought them also to the holy ground on which she stood.

" Those to whom she waved her farewells from the steps of her home, her beautiful face and dignified figure framed in the doorway, carry with them something more than a gracious memory. The knowledge of one who passed through so many of the barriers that separate man from God will prevent their ever feeling such barriers to be impenetrable."

CHAPTER X

THE LAST OFFERING

Lord, I do choose the higher than my will.
I would be handled by Thy nursing arms
After Thy will, not my infant alarms.
Hurt me Thou wilt—but then more loving still,
If more can be and less, in love's perfect zone!
My fancy shrinks from least of all Thy harms,
But do Thy will with me—I am Thine own.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

WHEN Mary Clifford was preparing to address the Glasgow Conference of Women Workers in 1894 on *The Possible Deterioration of the Worker*, she wrote to her old friend and master in the spiritual life, the Rev. Andrew Jukes, for his thoughts on the subject. In his reply he said: "The Christian life is not all working. There is first learning, then working, then suffering. From workers we may become sufferers. And if so, this may be real advance, not deterioration." He speaks of the apparent failure of "an old prisoner of Jesus Christ," and says, "Special temptations and distresses, which such a one may need to bring him more out of self, may, as has been the case with many devoted souls, be taken as proofs that they are forsaken of God. Yet through all this failing strength and failing comfort a soul may be becoming more and more Christ-like."

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The words seem prophetic of the experience that was to come to Mary herself.

In the spring of 1913 her illness returned with redoubled force. In January both Bishop Clifford and Mrs. Clifford had been very ill. Mary had stayed at Stoke Bishop Vicarage to be with them. Then she herself caught influenza, and this broke down the physical strength which was already weaker than could easily be realised by those who knew her usual cheery activity, and saw her walking out in all weathers, crossing Durdham Down to get to her brother's church in spite of winter storms and rain.

Her seventy years of life had been full beyond the ordinary measure of joy and love and strength; and she had shared her gifts lavishly, not waiting to find a need, but giving freely to all and enriching her own life by her giving. It had been the insight of sympathy more than her own experience that had enabled her to feel the burdens of others and had taught her how to lighten them. But now she herself was to know "the failing strength and failing comfort" of which her old friend had written.

The illness took from her her splendid natural strength, and left her with a weariness that could not rest, and depression of mind which was only made bearable by her habit of self-control and her determined faith, which together carried her through the darkest hours.

For it was a dark and shadowy way through which she had to pass. That year there was an exquisite early summer. She drove out, and sat in the open air as much as possible; and day after day the spring green gave place to the wealth of summer foliage

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and flowers, under skies of deepest blue and ever-varying clouds of brilliant white. She would make an effort to respond to beauty which in former days would have enraptured her ; but we saw the patient look of disappointment and suffering in her face as she realised that the old joy of life had fled. It was out of the depths that she gave thanks.

Moreover, she did not yet understand her illness. She felt she must not give way : she wanted to strain every nerve to use such weakened energy as was left to her and to get well. Her knowledge of work to be done was as clear as ever : her sensitive realisation of others' needs and dangers and her sense of responsibility and eagerness to serve were no wit diminished. For fifty years she had been the life and support of her whole family and of a wide circle of friends and fellow-workers besides. The life-long habit of her mind was towards active self-sacrifice, and finally to accept helplessness and apparent uselessness without trying to conquer them was a new and hard lesson to learn.

It was not only pleasure in outward things that was taken from her ; she seemed to feel the very foundations of her life cast down. The joy of her faith itself was darkened ; and while her whole desire and will proclaimed, "It is good for me to hold me fast by God"—"the anchor *holds*," she wrote to Mrs. Cholmeley—her soul seemed to cry out, "O that I knew where I might find Him !" But each day in the evening the heavy cloud was lifted, and she said that then she could pray and give thanks.

The physical weakness multiplied a hundredfold every little anxiety and pain. In the shattered

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state of her nerves any unexpected and unexplained absence of a member of the household threw her into an agony of apprehension and fear. Besides this, the habits, grown into instincts, of protecting the weak in danger and of giving to those in need, now escaped from control and gave her no peace ; and often it was no easy task for those who lived with her to reassure her anxieties and to find relief for her suddenly checked energies.

Sometimes the cause of her fear was serious. She was specially apprehensive of the dangers of the dark places about a city at night. Long years before, when she was new to public work, a terrible disaster that had befallen a little unprotected servant girl had given her a severe shock, and the memory of it was never far from her mind. So when she discovered, close to her home, a narrow passage at the back of some houses completely dark at night, she insisted on a letter being written to the city authorities, pointing out that if a street lamp were moved a few yards it would shine down that passage and remove the danger of the darkness. The Sanitary Inspector most courteously came about the matter, and the lamp was immediately moved as she had desired.

Her fears and apprehensions, and often her generosity, were at times a cause of embarrassment to those to whom it fell to carry out her wishes. How could any one but herself, for instance, carry a little (we thought quite unnecessary) plate of milk pudding out to the gardener with the gracious, motherly dignity that would call forth a look of gratified pleasure instead of puzzled amusement ?

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Yet in spite of difficulties and even unwillingness we all, I think, felt a constraint to obey her where possible, having learnt by experience that the generous impulses of one who had so yielded herself to be an instrument in God's hands often had an influence for good that we could not calculate.

Sometimes we opposed her wishes: sometimes they were quite outside our power to fulfil. Then one read in her face what she went through: first the silent strength of will that what she wanted *must be done*, in order to avert the calamity which, reasonably or unreasonably, she feared; then when she found that what she thought so necessary could not, or would not, be done, another silence, but now a lifting up and yielding of her whole will to God; and then she would pray and ask for others' prayers that whatever happened God would take it into His hands. The pain that such incidents gave her was part of her life's sacrifice. She had never put away from her the knowledge of evil and suffering, but had willingly accepted the responsibility of being her brother's keeper. All through her years of strength the intensity of her understanding and sympathy was translated into action. Whenever she knew of any need she gave herself no rest until she had at least done what was in her power to relieve it. Now that she could no longer act for herself she had helplessly to endure the knowledge, which her long years of work had given her, of the cruelty of sin and indifference. Yet she would not have said she was helpless, for she, who had never trusted in her own strength or wisdom, could still, as ever, put her whole trust and confidence in God's mercy;

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and who shall measure the results of such hard-won power of prayer ?

"I've *never* entirely trusted a matter *undoubtedly* to God without His undertaking it beautifully," she wrote to Mary Williams in the dark days of the War. "Don't let us be afraid," she added, appealing again to her own experience. "All our family things, money and people—how He has *landed* us, not one missing."

The acute mental suffering of the first year or two was really the most painful part of her illness. But to those who were near her it revealed, as perhaps nothing else could have done, the selflessness and spiritual strength of her character. When the ordinary controls are weakened and the outer covering of habits and conventions broken up, the real motives and desires of the heart and will cannot be hidden. Her painful anxieties, even when imaginary, seemed never to be on her own account ; or if self entered into them, it was fear lest she should lose the self-control and trust in God which alone could carry her through the time of trial : the pathetic restlessness was still all desire that she might spend herself for others. "If only I could do something useful," she said often, "I think I should be so much better."

She was subject to frequent slight and brief attacks of partial paralysis and aphasia. The memory of her sister's long illness must have been present in her mind ; but each time, with a definite act of her will, she yielded herself into God's hands, knowing

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what might follow, but ready to accept it ; more than ready at those times when it seemed that death itself was near, death the friend of the tired body, the liberator and re-uniter. At such moments as these, which came some four or five times in the earlier part of her illness, there was a look of brightness and of hope in her eyes, even as she felt her bodily power going from her, a look different from the patience with which she faced the thought of a long time of helplessness.

In October, 1913, Mr. Pakenham Walsh (now Bishop of Assam) came unexpectedly to stay with Bishop Clifford. He had been the means of many wonderful cures granted in answer to prayer and the use of the Sacrament of Holy Unction,¹ and one day Bishop Clifford brought him to see Mary and talk to her about it. It was arranged (with Dr. Annie Cornall's warm approval) that he should come that same evening and give her the Anointing. One of the prayers used spoke in very definite words of the expectation of complete recovery of bodily health, and at the end of it Mary herself interrupted, saying, slowly and earnestly, as though in humble protest, "And may I just say, We pray that this may be all and only according to Thy will."

Then the priest laid his hands upon her, saying the words, "Mary, the power of the Holy Ghost be upon thee, to heal all thy sickness and all thy infirmities, to comfort all thy sufferings, and to forgive thee all thy sins." Then he anointed her, and prayed in the words of the Prayer Book of 1549. This

¹ *Epistle of St. James, v. 14, 15.*

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prayer asks for the gift of spiritual health and the inward anointing of the Holy Ghost, "who is the Spirit of all strength, comfort, relief and gladness," the gift which Mary desired so much more than mere bodily recovery.

Many a time during the five long weary years that followed, of growing weakness and growing patience, one remembered that little interrupting prayer of hers, and knew that it was being answered in her power of patient submission. She was following her Master and accepting, in her degree, her share of the pain of the world.

She wrote some time after this to Mrs. Cholmeley, "No cure was granted ; but I intend to give thanks for what *has come*, and not to fix my *desire* on what did not." But from that time the painful and almost uncontrollable attacks of nervousness ceased and troubled her no more.

With extreme care and avoidance of all excitement, but chiefly by her own spirit of habitual prayer and self-control, her mind grew less restless, and her illness, though inexpressibly tedious to one of her temperament, became gradually more bearable as the years went on.

Letter writing was difficult to her now, but she loved to keep in touch with her friends by means of little notes, full of affection and of her own old sympathetic interest in their joys and sorrows, and containing many an exquisite expression of her faith and spiritual experience. But it is difficult to quote from them, for words did not come easily to her as in former years, and some seem too sacred for print. The following passages are from letters

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to her niece Mary Williams, then in India doing mission work :—

THE GARDEN, REDLAND GREEN,
August 20th.

MY POLLY,—Letters came this morning. Yours to me was about the rains having come, and the harvest, and it made me so glad. It made me so *very* glad, because you know with this illness I get so dried and parched, and it seems that the Psalms that mourn after God were the way we naturally express ourselves. . . . Few people know how curiously hard this idle life is, with its incapacities. One is powerless to *do*, and our Lord holds our desires as well. I know how many many beloveds are praying for me, so I won't run on like this.

Dec. 1st, 1913.— . . . I am learning much, many very humbling things which one only suspected before ; so, so little, so very little done for Him only. If He gives one love, and the power of knowing His love, what a spring of joy. Some of this [lack of love] now is illness, but I never had nearly enough love, only such a glimmer. But anyhow I know He is *there*.

April 29th, 1914.—I hope to send you £2 when my income tax is repaid, for one of the children, towards their keep, or for any other thing you wish for in your work. I am so pleased to think my wee pinafores will suit your babies. I won't send them till I hear that they will really fit, and then I shall have four or five, and shall be so glad to make them or any simple thing. . . .

I do feel, about my illness, that I can ask

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confidently for all that is *not perfectly of God* to be cured and got rid of ; whether bodily I get well or not does not come in. So you must be one of those who pray with confidence that I may be "healthily ill," as dear Mrs. Harvey did, and so it was answered in her case. Beyond that point, I leave my will utterly in His hands.

When Mary found the fears and depression of her illness very hard to bear, she would write a prayer or a verse on a piece of paper and keep it by her, so that she might look at it in the long sleepless early morning hours, and when prayer was difficult.

"My soul waiteth for the Lord," she wrote, "as they that wait for the morning watch. My soul, wait *only* for the morning watch."

I do get very broken nights (she wrote to Mrs. Cholmeley), which means tired days. I have been thinking over "the God of my *health*." If I could, leave things, as I think I used to do, *with Him*. I think I should be well. So do pray for that for me.

"When I awake in His likeness I shall be satisfied." I know that, and He knows it is my infirmity ; and my *will* is not wrong. . . . I am telling Him (our Lord) that I trust Him, and shall venture to do so every time the fears and doubts do come, and praise Him for His present power to help.

One remembers her look of response as, in reading to her the daily Psalms, one came to those that "mourn after God" and that cry for help against the enemy: "Destroy all them that vex my soul, *for I am Thy servant*."

The following prayer against her enemy, fear,

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was kept in her Bible or on her writing table. She was entirely indifferent about keeping such things private, and this makes one the less unwilling to give them to the world for the comfort and guidance of others who may have to pass through like trials.

My God. I am Thine.

Above all possessions I desire Thee.

Father, manifest Thyself. I yield myself to Thee. I trust Thy promises. Wilt Thou grant that this illness may be the means of manifesting Thy Name.

Lord Jesus, Who didst utterly conquer Satan for Thy Church, conquer him now. Thou knowest my cowardice and feebleness.

Holy Spirit, may we Thy servants live in Thy light. Grant us such power that we may instantly reject the enemy.

I come in the name of Jesus, trusting myself and my beloveds to our Father in heaven, for life, for death, for ever and everywhere. I do love Thee. I will trust Thee and not be afraid.

Later in her illness she wrote this, like a little letter to her Lord :—

May 26th.

My Lord, I entreat Thy gracious favour that in spite of illness I may realise through Thy Spirit at this time Thy love and care.

Make me able to step beyond self, to cast it aside and look up, and if I can't see Thy blessed face, yet to know it is there and Thy hand holding mine.

My Saviour, my Master, forgive the sins which grieve Thee and in some degree have grieved me. I deserve nothing. Oh, that I might know my place in Thy kingdom.

Thy M. C.

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When the War broke out, such of its heart-breaking news as could not be kept from her did not injure her physically as much as we feared. This may well have been because it was no new thing for her to face the pain of the world, and to look up to God Who alone could control the tremendous issues at stake.

"I like to think how we are ordered to hope, and so are justified in rejoicing in hope," she wrote to Miss Pigott. "And all I have ever trusted to Him has turned out in a way we can now be glad of."

This was no abstract and impersonal expression of trust, for the War did not leave her untouched. One of her nephews, Anthony, had just become a qualified medical doctor at Guy's Hospital (his "Aunt Mamie" loved to consult him professionally when he came home for his brief holidays). He already had his commission in the Officers' Reserve, having joined the Officers' Training Corps as an undergraduate at Cambridge, and in the first days of the War he was drafted into the 3rd Dragoon Guards. He was for ten months at Canterbury, training recruits. At the end of May, 1915, he was sent to the front in charge of a machine-gun section. On June 5th we had his first letter from the trenches. The same evening came the telegram saying he had been killed in action three days before.

We kept the news from Mary that night, thinking the distress would make her sleepless and ill. But we were wrong, as we always are when we calculate according to earthly values when dealing with one who lives on the spiritual plane. Mary was not far

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from the other side herself; and she had shown no sign of what she was suffering in the thought of Anthony amid the horrors of the War. Afterwards she said she did not think she could have borne it many days. But it was different now. The letter that had come that morning made light of the dangers in consideration for our anxiety, and told of his opportunities of using his medical knowledge to relieve the wounded. And it told, with childlike simplicity, how he found comfort in saying over hymns "in the morning and often," and strength in the thought of our prayers for him.

To Mary these were the things which had an eternal significance, and Anthony was lifted above the danger of wounds and earthly pain and terror.

She wrote to Mrs. Cholmeley :—

Last evening a telegram told Alfred that our dear Anthony is gone. First of all my heart rushed up in thankfulness, and I believe *all is well*. We had had a heavenly letter from him in the morning written on his first day in the trenches, where a nightingale had been singing, and he saying hymns to himself and attending to wounded men (the regimental surgeon being farther out of the way, with patients), and his own heart very perfectly in peace. It made me happy all day. I cannot write more. I only heard of it in the morning from Claire.

At the beginning of 1917 her niece Mary Williams came home from India, and the joy of having her near during the remaining two years of illness seemed to some extent to quiet her restlessness and discomfort. She never complained of separation,

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but to have her family close around her had always been one of her chief earthly pleasures. Throughout the six and a half years of illness she had the great comfort of receiving Holy Communion every week at the hands of her brother Bishop Clifford or of her nephew and Godson, John Williams (now a priest of the Society of St. John the Evangelist at Cowley), when he happened to be at home. When she was well enough this would be in Bishop Clifford's private chapel in the Vicarage at Stoke Bishop. At other times a little altar was put up in her own room, and her sister Claire and her nieces and the faithful nurses who attended her were with her ; and as she said in her youth, she would "gather her beloveds"—living and departed—"around her and realise her part in the communion of saints."

She had many visits, too, from her dear friend Mrs. Cholmeley, perhaps the only one outside the family whose restful presence called for no effort on Mary's part ; for though her love for and interest in her friends increased rather than diminished, she felt incapable of the effort that conversation and even sympathy demanded.

She did not lose her inward touch with the great things going on in the world ; and she loved to hear how others were carrying on the work which had been hers, and were upholding the high standard and spiritual tone which she had always valued infinitely more than all apparent success or material ends accomplished. Any news in which she knew her old friends would rejoice called forth immediately a little letter of sympathy and congratulation. She was full of thankfulness and pleasure at hearing

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that Miss Rosa Pease was elected Chairman of the Bristol Board of Guardians ; she wrote her congratulation and encouragement to Miss E. H. Smith, President of the Bristol and Clifton Branch of the National Council of Women ; and to Miss Tanner, who for many years had been Secretary of the Bristol Women's Suffrage Society, when at last the Act was passed giving the vote to women ; and a little letter to Lady Battersea expressed her thankfulness and sympathy at the news of the liberation of Jerusalem.

In October, 1918, Mary's physical weakness became too great for her to leave her bed. Then there came a beautiful and unexpected change, for as the end was clearly drawing near and the power of movement and of speech departed from her, the spiritual cloud seemed to lift. A new light shone in her eyes and the old brightness in her smile. Earthly surroundings seemed to fade into dimness, and she heard the good news of the Armistice as in a dream. But she lived in the knowledge of human and of heavenly love. Sometimes she was murmuring prayers to herself, though the words were indistinct ; but we heard, "Praise Him—Praise Him," spoken quite clearly, and we saw the look of peace and joy in her face.

In the last weeks she suffered much pain, but for a good deal of the time she was only half-conscious. Sometimes, even in the discomfort of delirium, the old sweet unselfishness (and never anything but that) appeared again, for the imaginary anxieties which troubled her seemed to urge her to provide food for someone who was starving, or to hasten to prepare a feast for a school children's treat.

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Often her beloved ones on the other side of death—"the Dad," Margaret, Edward and the rest—seemed as present to her as we who were tending her. But when any little thing was done for her she would smile her gratitude to us, even though she could not speak; and the smile came quickest when she was in pain, as though she was wanting to reassure us.

At last, on the 15th of January, 1919, the long watch of utter weakness ended. As we knelt in the silence of her room, there came through the open window the sound of the mid-day Angelus ringing its eternal glad surrender, "*Behold the hand-maid of the Lord: be it unto me according to Thy word.*" When the bell ceased she had crossed the river.

There was a pause in the storms and rain of January, and on a day of still sunshine and white frost we laid the beloved earthly garment to rest in the old country churchyard at Henbury. It is a lovely spot, where in old mossy walls little ferns and flowers nestle, and where cypresses and cedars watch in a green silence that is broken only by the voices of birds and children. Many friends of Mary's were there, in spite of the long distance from Bristol and Clifton.

When the quiet service was over, two tiny boys who were playing in the churchyard crept to the front. Seriously and reverently they stood for a long minute looking down into the flower-strewn earth; then very gravely, hand in hand, they wandered away in the sunshine.

. . . The waters indeed are to the palate bitter, and to the stomach cold ; yet the thoughts of what I am going to, and of the conduct that waits for me on the other side, doth lie as a glowing coal at my heart.

I see myself now at the end of my Journey ; my toilsome days are ended. I am going now to see that Head that was crowned with thorns, and that Face that was spit upon for me.

I have formerly lived by hear-say and Faith ; but now I go where I shall live by Sight, and shall be with him in whose company I delight myself.

I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of ; and wherever I have seen the print of his shoe in the earth, there have I coveted to set my foot too.

His Name has been to me as a civet-box ; yea, sweeter than all perfumes. His Voice to me has been most sweet ; and his Countenance I have more desired than they that have most desired the light of the Sun. His Word I did use to gather for my food, and for antidotes against my faintings. He has held me, and I have kept me from mine iniquities ; yea, my steps hath he strengthened in his Way.

Now, while he was thus in discourse, his countenance changed, his strong man bowed under him ; and after he had said, TAKE ME, FOR I COME UNTO THEE, he ceased to be seen of them.

But Glorious it was to see, how the open Region was filled with Horses and Chariots, with Trumpeters and Pipers, with Singers and Players on stringed instruments, to welcome the Pilgrims as they went up, and followed one another in at the Beautiful Gate of the City.

THE PASSING OF MR. STANDFAST,
Pilgrim's Progress.



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